GHOSTLY PHENOMENA

ELLIOTT O'DONNELL

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GHOSTLY PHENOMENA

BY

ELLIOT O'DONNELL

AUTHOR OF

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER PAGE

I. "ELEMENTALS" - - - - - - 3

II. PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING AND DEAD —DEATH WARNINGS AND DREAMS - 35

PART II.

PHENOMENA WITNESSED BY OTHER PEOPLE.

III. "ELEMENTALS" - - - - - - 59

IV. PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD - - - 90

PART III.

V. THE HAUNTINGS OF THE OLD SYDERSTERNE PARSONAGE (1833), NEAR FAKENHAM, AND A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN SYDENHAM - - - 123

PART IV.

VI. SUGGESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES - - 143

PART I.

GHOSTLY PHENOMENA

CHAPTER I.

"ELEMENTALS."

I HAVE, from time to time, witnessed many manifestations which I believe to have been superphysical, both from the peculiarity of their properties, and from the effects their presence invariably produced on me—an effect I cannot associate with anything physical.

One of the first occult phenomena I remember, appeared to me when I was about five years of age. I was then living in a town in the West of England, and had, according to the usual custom, been put to bed at six o'clock. I had spent a very happy day, playing with my favourite toys—soldiers—and not being in the least degree tired, was amusing myself with planning a fresh campaign for the following morning, when I suddenly noticed that the bedroom door (which I distinctly remembered my

nurse carefully latching) was slowly opening. Thinking this was very curious, but without the slightest suspicion of ghosts, I sat up in the bed and watched.

The door continued to open, and at last I caught sight of something so extraordinary that my guilty conscience at once associated it with the Devil, with regard to whom I distinctly recollected to have spoken that afternoon in a sceptical, and I frankly admit, very disrespectful manner. But far from feeling the proximity of that heat which all those who profess authority on Satanic matters ascribe to Satan, I felt decidedly cold—so cold, indeed, that my hands grew numb and my teeth chattered. At first I only saw two light, glittering eyes that fixed themselves on me with an expression of diabolical glee, but I was soon able to perceive that they were set in a huge, flat face, covered with fulsome-looking yellow spots about the size of a threepenny bit. I do not remember noticing any of the other features, save the mouth, which was large and gaping. The body to which the head was attached was quite nude, and covered all over with spots similar to those on the face. I cannot recall any arms, though I have vivid recollections of two thick and, to all appearances,

jointless legs, by the use of which it left the doorway, and, gliding noiselessly over the carpet, approached an empty bed, placed in a parallel position to my own. There it halted, and thrusting its misshapen head forward, it fixed its malevolent eyes on me with a penetrating stare. On this occasion, I was far less frightened than on any of my subsequent experiences with the occult. Why, I cannot say, for the manifestation was certainly one of the most hideous I have ever seen. My curiosity, however, was far greater than my fear, and I kept asking myself what the Thing was, and why it was there?

It did not seem to me to be composed of ordinary flesh and blood, but rather of some luminous matter that resembled the light emanating from a glow-worm.

After remaining in the same attitude for what seemed to me an incalculably long time, it gradually receded, and assuming, all of a sudden, a horizontal attitude, passed head first through the wall opposite to where I sat. Next day, I made a sketch of the apparition, and showed it to my relatives, who, of course, told me I had been dreaming. About two weeks later I was ill in bed with a painful, if not actually dangerous, disease. I was giving an account of

this manifestation at a lecture I delivered two or three years ago in B., and when I had finished speaking was called aside by one of my audience who very shyly told me that he, too, had had a similar experience. Prior to being attacked by diphtheria, he had seen a queer-looking apparition that had approached his bedside and leaned over him. He assured me that he had been fully awake at the time, and had applied tests to prove that the phenomenon was entirely objective.

A number of other cases, too, have been reported to me, in which various species of phantasms have been seen before different illnesses. Hence I believe that certain spirits are symbolical of certain diseases, if not the actual creators of the bacilli from which those diseases arise. To these phantasms I have given the name of Morbas. I have seen two other morbas in addition to the one I have already described. The first case happened to me when I was in Dublin, reading for the Royal Irish Constabulary at the then well-known Queen's Service Academy, Ely Place. I lodged in Merrion Street, and above my rooms were those of a Mr. Charles Clifford, at that time a briefless barrister, but who afterwards established a big reputation in the West Indies, where he eventually died. I became

very friendly with Mr. Clifford, whose father had been a contemporary with several of my relations—also barristers—at Trinity College. One particularly mild evening,—if I remember rightly it was in the beginning of September—I was chatting away with him in his sitting-room, when he suddenly complained of feeling extremely cold, and asked me if I would mind shutting the window, as I was nearest to it. As I got up in order to carry out his wishes, I noticed that the curtain on the near side of the recess (it was a bay window) was rustling in a very peculiar manner, and I was just going to call my friend's attention to it when I perceived the most odd-looking, yellow hand suddenly emerge from the drapery. Sick with fear, but urged on by a curiosity I could not restrain, I approached the curtain, and, pulling it aside vigorously, found myself confronted by the tall, nude, yellow figure of some thing utterly indefinable. It seemed to me to be wholly composed of some vibrating, luminous matter. Its head was large and round, its eyes light green, oblique and full of intense hatred. I did not notice any other features. Its awful expression of malignity so fascinated me that I could not remove my gaze from its face, and I was standing

still and staring at it helplessly, unable to move or speak, when Clifford asked what in the world was the matter. The moment he spoke the phenomenon vanished, and the spell which its appearance had cast over me being thus broken, I shut the window and returned to my seat.

I did not mention what I had seen to Clifford, as he was of an extremely nervous temperament, and, like the majority of Irishmen, very superstitious. I made, however, a note of the occurrence in my diary, and was not surprised when, eight or nine days later, Clifford was ill in bed with a malignant disease.

The second instance happened when I was on tour with No. 1 Company of "The Only Way." We were performing in Plymouth, and I was sharing rooms with an actor of the name of Cornelius, who had lately joined us from a Dramatic School in Oxford Street. Saturday night, as every one in the profession knows, is the most tiring night in the week, for apart from there being a matinée that day, there is packing to be done after the evening performance, and one rarely, if ever, leaves the theatre before half-past twelve or one o'clock. On the Saturday night I am about to speak of, Cornelius, who

did not appear in the last act, had gone home before me, and on my leaving the theatre an hour or so later, I found the streets in the vicinity of our lodgings silent and deserted. I was hastening along, thinking, I admit, of the good things that awaited us at supper, for Cornelius, who arranged the meals, was an excellent caterer, when, just as I was turning in at our gate, I saw a tall figure come out of the house and approach me with a peculiar, gliding motion. A cold terror at once ran through me, for I instinctively felt that the figure was nothing human. Overcoming, with a desperate effort, a sudden sensation of helplessness, I moved aside, and, as I did so, the figure halted; I then perceived that it was exactly like the yellow phantasm I had seen in Dublin some nine or ten years previously. It remained stationary for, perhaps, forty seconds, when it seemed to dissolve into the mist. I then pushed open the gate and entered the house. I made a note of the vision, and learned some few weeks later that an actor, who was then in the rooms we had occupied, had fallen a victim there to the same malady that had attacked Clifford.

From the numerous cases that have been related to me, as well as from my own experience,

I have come to the conclusion that certain species of phantasms prefer to appear to children, and only under exceptional circumstances manifest themselves to adults.

One of these species bears a slight resemblance to Pixies, inasmuch as they are exceedingly diminutive; but there the likeness ends. For whereas Pixies, from most of the statements I have heard regarding them, are an intelligent race of fairies that prefer places remote from the haunts of men, these phantasms do not seem to possess any intelligence or feeling at all, and are frequently to be seen in houses occupied by living people. Their visits, apparently, have no object—they are merely forms consisting of matter without mind. Night after night, when I was a little boy, I used to lie awake watching half a dozen or so of these tiny phantasms moving about the floor or turning round and round on the top of a wardrobe that faced the bed. In appearance they were more or less like men—never women—but always grotesque, with big heads, long beards, and something odd in the shape of their limbs and bodies. Their faces were uniformly white, and utterly devoid of expression. I was never in the least degree afraid of them, but often felt very much annoyed

because they did not do anything sensible. On the slightest sound or movement on my part they instantly vanished, and would not appear again till the following evening.

I daresay some writers on Occultism would classify them with Nature Spirits, but I prefer to designate them a species of the genus "Elemental"—that is to say, a species of the phantasm that has never inhabited any kind of earthly body.

One afternoon in May, many years ago,—I was a very young child at the time,—I happened to be staying with some friends in the country, and on running to the nursery window to look at what I thought was one of the household behaving in a very odd manner in the garden, I perceived to my astonishment the figure of a woman with a long beard, rolling about on the lawn as if in great agony.

There was something so odd, both in her appearance and actions, that I was too fascinated to remove my gaze from her, and in breathless silence watched her slowly rise up and approach the window. I then saw that her face was hardly like that of a human being, but resembled rather some very grotesque kind of animal, and that her fingers, which she kept opening and shutting,

770382

were short and webbed. She did not impress me as being either horrible or malignant, and I was noticing, with the keenest interest, the peculiarities of her formation when one of the servants entered the nursery, and she instantly vanished.

How to classify this phenomenon, I must confess I am somewhat puzzled. It does not appear to me to belong altogether to the order of Vagrarian, and yet I know of no other species of phantasm to which it is more nearly allied. This type of ghost, *i.e.*, the Vagrarian, is very often seen by children. It is a species of Elemental, and is in my opinion a survival (or descendant) of the earliest attempts at life on this planet—possibly an experiment in forms of life half physical, half superphysical—prior to the creation and selection of animal and vegetable life as it is known to us.

In addition to the power of materialising and dematerialising at will, Vagrarians can, at times, exercise a certain amount of physical force. I have heard of them, for example, moving furniture, banging on doors and walls, and making all sorts of similar disturbances. I have used the expression, "or descendants," with regard them because I think it is quite feasible that

Vagrarians are mortal, and that they possess some especial means of generating.

They are generally to be met with in lonely places—country lanes and spinneys, empty houses, isolated barns, and on moors, commons, and hill-tops. In appearance they are caricatures of man and beast—sometimes compounds of both—and would seem to possess a great diversity of form. I have, for example, had them described to me as tall, thin figures with tiny, rotund, or flat, rectangular, or wholly animal heads, and again as short, squat figures with a similar variety of heads. They are probably the most terrifying of all apparitions, as, apart from the grotesqueness of their bodies, the expression in their eyes is invariably diabolical; they seem, indeed, to be animated with an intense, an absolutely unlimited, animosity to every form of earthly life. Why, I cannot, of course, say, unless it is that they are jealous of both man and beast, whom they might possibly regard as the usurpers of a sphere which was at one time strictly confined to themselves. My first experience of this kind of phantasm occurred when I was a boy. I was staying with some friends in a large old country house in the Midlands, and being, even at that early age, fond of adven-

ture, I frequently used to wander off alone in order to explore the adjacent neighbourhood. On one of these peregrinations I arrived at a farm which, for some reason or other, happened just then to be untenanted. Delighted at the prospect of examining the empty buildings, I scaled a gate, and, crossing a paved yard, entered a large barn. The sight of one or two rats scurrying away at my approach made me wish I had my friend's terrier with me, and I was turning to look for a stone or some missile to throw at them, when a noise in the far corner of the building attracted my attention. It was now twilight, and the only windows in the place being small, dirty, and high from the ground, the further extremities of the barn were bathed in gloom, and in a gloom that made me feel nervous. Following the direction of the sound, I looked and saw to my inconceivable horror a tall, luminous something with a white rectangular head, crouching on the floor. As its long, glittering, evil eyes met mine it sprang up (I then perceived that it was fully seven feet high and perfectly nude), and, with its spidery arms poised high in the air, darted forward. Shrieking at the top of my voice, I flew, and my wild cries for help being overheard by some of my

friends, who chanced to be returning home that way, they at once came to my assistance. I shall never forget their faces, for I am sure my cries frightened them almost as much as the apparition had frightened me. To assure me it must have been my imagination, they searched the building, and, of course, saw nothing, as the phantasm had, doubtless, dematerialised. I made enquiries, however, on the quiet about the farm, and learned that it had always borne the reputation for being haunted, and that it was on that account that it was then untenanted. Needless to say, I never ventured there again alone!

When I was in Dublin in 1892, I stayed for a while at a boarding-house in Leeson Street. The house, which was large and gloomy, impressed me from the very first with a sense of loneliness, and I intuitively felt that all its denizens were not of flesh and blood. I occupied a bedroom on the first floor, on which at the time of my visit there were only two other people, both of whom slept in rooms opposite to mine, on the other side of the landing. The shape of my room was rendered somewhat peculiar owing to the deep window recess on the one side, and the still deeper alcove, in which my bed stood, on the other. In the twilight,

whilst the former of these recesses was filled with the weirdest shadows imaginable, the latter was so bathed in gloom as to be hardly discernible at all. The furniture, which reflected the past glories of the proprietress, who, like so many people in that position in Dublin, belonged to an at one time wealthy family of landed proprietors, consisted of a massive mahogany four-poster, handsomely carved and draped in faded yellow tapestry, a huge, mahogany wardrobe, an ottoman, covered with tapestry, adorned at irregular intervals with the most grotesque arabesque figures; a bog-oak chest, richly carved and always kept locked; two antique, big, oaken chairs, and several rather damaged and painfully modern cane-bottomed ones; a threadbare carpet that might have been a Brussels, and just the necessary amount of ordinary bedroom articles, several of which were very much the worse for wear.

I never liked the room, for, apart from its habitual darkness—a darkness that seemed to me to be quite independent of the daylight—there was in it an atmosphere of intense oppression, an oppression that seemed to arise solely and wholly from an evil influence. Night after night my sleep was disturbed by the most harrowing dreams, from which I invariably awoke

with a start to find my heart beating violently, and my body bathed in perspiration. Those sort of dreams were quite unusual to me; indeed, I had seldom had them since I was a child; they certainly could not be in any way accounted for by my state of health, which was quite normal, nor by my food, which was of the simplest and most digestive nature. Though ashamed to admit it, I at last grew to dread going to bed on account of those dreams, and I accordingly requested the proprietress of the establishment to give me another room. This she somewhat reluctantly promised to do the following day. Overjoyed at the prospect of so speedy a deliverance from a room I so cordially feared and detested, I went to bed that night with a comparatively light heart, assuring myself gleefully that it would be the last time I should sleep there. I can remember even now my thoughts as I undressed. What an inadequate light my candle gave as I placed it on the chimney-piece, and watched its feeble, flickering flame vainly trying to dissipate the heavy folds of darkness that seemed to roll in on me from the surrounding nooks and crannies with unprecedented intensity! How unusually bright the surface of the mirror looked, and with what remarkable clear-

ness it reflected the bog-oak chest! The bog-oak chest! I could not remove my eyes from it, and as I stared at its image in the glass, I saw to my horror the long-locked, heavy cover slowly begin to rise. Gradually, very gradually, it opened, until I fancied I could detect something grey and evil peering out at me. My terror was now so great that I dare not turn round to look at the actual chest, but was compelled by an irresistible fascination to keep my attention riveted on the mirror, upon the surface of which there suddenly fell a dark and fantastically shaped shadow that, apparently proceeding from the chest, moved stealthily towards my bed, and disappeared in the innermost recesses of the dimly-lighted alcove. I was so unnerved by this incident that it was only after a series of severe mental efforts that I could persuade myself to make a thorough examination of the room, and so satisfy myself that what I had seen was in all probability the result of my imagination. With timid footsteps I first of all approached the chest—it was still locked. I then advanced more complacently to the bed, and, falling on my hands and knees, peered under it—there was nothing to be seen! Endeavouring to persuade myself now that there were

absolutely no grounds for fear, and that mere shadows—for whichever way I turned, the room was full of them—could do me no harm, I undressed, and, blowing out the candle, got into bed. Having spent the day fishing off the Mugglestone Rocks, near Dalkey (in company with two of my fellow students at the Queen's Service Academy), I felt healthily tired, and, after a few preliminary turns and twists to get into a comfortable position, was soon fast asleep. I awoke with a violent start, just as the clock on the landing outside solemnly struck two. The house was wrapped in complete silence, and, beyond a few occasional creakings on the stairs and in—so I fancied—the recess of the window, I could hear nothing. The sky, which had been covered with a thick coating of grey mist all the day, had cleared, and a silvery stream of moonlight, pouring in through the open window, flooded that side of the room on which stood the bog-oak chest. Again my eyes involuntarily wandered to the mirror, which was exactly opposite to where I lay, and again, with even greater horror than before, I watched the lid of the chest slowly begin to rise. Wider and wider it opened, until, with a faint click, it fell back on its hinges and struck the wall. I then saw a

tall, grey shape climb out of it, and, with a snake-like movement of its long limbs, advance silently towards me. Though it was in the full glare of the moonbeams, I cannot say definitely what it was like, saving that it impressed me with a strong sense of its utter grotesqueness, a grotesqueness that at once pronounced it a Vagrarian. Paralysed with terror, and unable to move or utter a sound, I was constrained to sit bolt upright and await its approach. Though I could see no distinct eyes, I felt they were there, and that they were fixed on me all the time with insatiable glee and malice. Nearer and nearer it drew, until, gliding round the foot of the bed, it passed along by me, accompanied by a current of icy cold air that made every tooth in my head chatter. I then became conscious of some powerful magnetic force drawing me backwards, and as I sank gasping and panting on the pillow, a hideous, nude form rose quivering over me, and I lost consciousness. When I regained my senses the greyness of dawn was struggling for mastery with the moonbeams, and the Vagrarian had gone. That night, as I passed the door of the now vacated room on the way to my new and somewhat brighter quarters, I heard a soft chuckle proceeding, as I felt certain,

from the bog-oak chest—but I did not stop to investigate.

Oddly enough, that same year I had another experience of a similar nature, whilst staying with some relatives of mine in a town many miles remote from Dublin.

My bedroom on this occasion, however, was a cheerful contrast to the one in which I witnessed the phenomenon in Dublin, and from the fact that the colour of its wallpaper, carpet, curtains, bed-hangings, and furniture was emerald, was appropriately termed the Green Room. Its windows, large and low down, overlooked a garden that had been at one time, so I was told, a morass, and this garden, which was even now, at certain seasons of the year, excessively damp, was, in my opinion, the only drawback to an otherwise charming place. The first time I saw it, which was in my early childhood, I felt a cold, apprehensive chill steal over me, nor did I, subsequently, ever pass by it without experiencing a sensation of extreme horror and aversion. Consequently, much as I liked the Green Room itself, I would have infinitely preferred sleeping on the other side of the house. For the first few nights, however, I slept well, and the room was so warm and sunny that I

was even beginning to get over my antipathy to its prospect, when I received a rude shock. I had gone to bed at about eleven o'clock as usual, and, being unable to sleep, was formulating in my brain plans for the morrow, when I suddenly felt the bed violently agitated. My first thought was that some one was playing a practical joke on me, but I quickly pooh-poohed that idea, since, with the exception of one of the servants, I was by far the youngest person in the house, and my relatives were much too staid and sensible even to think of doing such a stupid thing. I next thought of burglars, and being a great deal younger and, I admit, pluckier than I am now, I struck a light, and, jumping out of bed, looked under it. There was nothing there. Greatly relieved, I hastily got into bed again, and, blowing out the candle, lay down. For some minutes all was still, and then the foot of the bed rose several inches from the ground, and, falling down with a dull crash, was shaken furiously. I was now very much frightened, for I knew the disturbance was due to nothing purely physical. Just at that very moment, too, a strong gust of air blowing in through the window transported the atmosphere of the garden, and simultaneously I

was seized with a sense of utter loneliness and despair. Lying back on my pillow, I now perceived the glistening white figure, quite nude, of what looked like an abnormally tall, thin man, with a cylindrical-shaped head, crawl from beneath my bed, and, suddenly assuming an erect position, bound to the window, through which he vanished to the darkness beyond.

The following day I made some excuse, and returned to Dublin; nor have I ever slept in the Green Room since. From the general appearance of the phenomenon, though I did not see its face, I have no hesitation in saying that it was a Vagrarian, and that the primitive nature of the garden attracted it thither.

That the famous Irish Banshee, like the Drummer and Pipers of Scotland, the Death Candles of Wales, and the various English family-ghosts, is the work of a species of Elemental, to which I have given the name, "Clanogrian," I have no doubt. The Celtic word Banshee, meaning the woman of the barrow, may in all probability account for the popular idea that whenever a member of one of the old Irish clans dies, their doom is foretold (to any or every member of the family but themselves) by a series of wails, in a woman's voice,

the phantasm of the woman herself being sometimes seen. But as a matter of fact there is a great variety of form in these death-warnings peculiar to the Irish, and each historic family has its own particular banshee. I have experienced the O'Donnell Banshee (that Banshee that has ofttimes been heard in Spain, Italy, France, and Austria, wherever, in fact, a member of the clan lives) on one occasion. I was living at the seaside at the time, and had been in bed about an hour, when I heard, as I thought, outside my door, not a series, but just one wail, which, beginning in a low key, ended withal in a scream so loud and agonising that my blood froze. Instinctively I knew it was the Banshee. Scrambling out of bed, I opened the door, and the moment I did so, several other doors opened, and a troup of terrified figures, in night attire, came timidly out on to the landing. One and all had heard the sound, which they, too, recognised as the Banshee, but we saw nothing. That night a near relative of mine died!

As I have already hinted, our clan is numerous, and as many of its members are now scattered throughout Europe, it is not often I come in touch with them. Last year, however, I met one of my kinsmen, who was at that time M.P.

for a London constituency, and in the course of a long conversation with him, I was interested to hear that on the eve of his father's death both he and his brother had heard the single wail of the Banshee (just as I had done) outside the door of the room in which they were sitting. They both rushed out, as one naturally does on hearing it, but saw nothing. Their father, it is needless to say, had been quite unconscious of the Banshee, though he was keenly sensible of every other sound.

I think any one, who is acquainted with the history of Ireland, in which my clan figures so prominently, will not be at all astonished that I have been visited by so many psychic phenomena.

The last experience, in connection with Elementals, to which I will allude here, happened to me some years ago, when I was renting a house in the extreme West of England. The house, though new—I was the first occupant—was not only close to a ridge of rocks, where it was alleged that wreckers used to carry on their nefarious work until quite recently, but was within walking distance of an ancient Celtic settlement. Furthermore, from comparatively close at hand, several skeletons, supposed to belong to the

Neolithic Age, had recently been disinterred.

I entered the house with a perfectly unbiassed mind; indeed, the thought that it might be haunted never for one moment entered my mind. Being at that time unmarried, I had a housekeeper, who soon complained to me of heavy, queer noises. Not wishing to lose her, I pooh-poohed the idea of there being anything wrong with the place, and suggested that the sounds were produced by the wind. It was a big, oddly-constructed place, full of long, dark passages and gloomy nooks and cupboards. I occupied a room on the top landing, separated from my housekeeper's by a sepulchral-looking corridor. Facing my door was that of a room connected by means of a low doorway with a big loft, the furthest extremities of which were totally obscured from view by a perpetual shroud of darkness, a darkness that the feeble rays of sunlight, filtering through the tiny skylight in the slanting roof, entirely failed to dissipate. This loft certainly did suggest the superphysical, and I felt that if any ghostly presence walked the house, it had its headquarters in that spot.

Still, I heard nothing, nothing beyond the occasional banging of a door and loud creakings on the staircase. My housekeeper, however,

left me, and her successor, who, to all appearances, was a practical, matter-of-fact sort of woman, had not been with me many days before she, too, gave notice.

"I never believed in ghosts till I came here," she told me, "but I am certain there are such things now. For every night I hear not only the strangest noises in my room, but the pattering of stealthy footsteps in the passage—sounds which I feel certain could neither be produced by rats nor the wind. Indeed, sir, I can't bear being left alone in the basement of the house after dusk, as I have the feeling that something uncanny walks about the house."

The housekeeper, who succeeded her, speedily gave notice for precisely the same reason, and every one, who subsequently slept in the house, complained that they had the most unpleasant sensations as soon as it was dark, and heard the most extraordinary and harrowing noises.

One woman, an ex-Salvation Army officer, whom I left in charge of the house during my temporary absence, told me she had been awakened in the night by the sounds of shuffling footsteps that had stopped outside her door, the handle of which was then slowly turned.

"I was awfully frightened," she said, "for

I knew at once it was a devil; but screwing up courage, I sang as loud as my parched throat would allow me, 'Washed in the blood of the Lamb,' when the evil spirit ceased its disturbances and I heard the sound of its steps in full retreat up the staircase."

When the summer season was at its height, the manageress of one of the adjacent hotels asked me if I would mind letting her have a room for the night, in my house, as she really did not know where to put all her visitors; there was no accommodation left for them in the town. I consented, and the visitor, who happened to be a middle-aged lady, told my housekeeper the following morning that she was sure the house was haunted, as she had been awakened about two o'clock from the most revolting dreams to hear the most curious footsteps—like those of some big animal—approach her door. She then heard the sound of heavy breathing, and watched the door handle gradually turn. "I then crossed myself and prayed with all my might," she said, "when the thing retired, and I heard its soft footsteps die away in the distance."

One morning, between three and four o'clock, I awoke from a very nasty dream, in which I had seen a tall figure with a grey, evil face come

bounding up the stairs, three steps at a time, and along the passages to my bedroom. I was so shocked at the appearance of this thing in my dreams, that for several minutes after recovering consciousn ss my heart palpitated violently. I then heard the sound of stealthy footsteps coming along the passage parallel with my bed. Nearer and nearer they came, until they halted outside my door, on the top panels of which there suddenly came a crash so tremendous that every article in the room quivered. I jumped out of bed, threw open the door, and saw—nothing. The passage was silent and empty.

The following night, taking various precautions to satisfy myself and others that the noises were due to superphysical agencies, I covered the floor of the passage outside my room with alternate layers of chalk, flour, and sand, fastened wires across it, and blocked it up at one end with a table, on the edge of which I carefully balanced a bottle of ink.

At the same time in the morning, however, the footsteps again came. First of all they came to the table, when I distinctly heard the ink-bottle hurled to the ground with a crash; then, passing through the wires and over the chalk, flour, and sand, they drew up to my door. Sick

with suspense I awaited the crash, and the moment it came, sprang out on the landing. There was nothing there, save an almost preternatural hush and the cold grey of dawn, but the instant I withdrew into my room, every wall and beam throughout the house shook with Satanical laughter! I was now so horrified that I never kept vigil in the place again, but left it shortly afterwards.

I subsequently heard from two entirely independent sources that an apparition had been seen on the site of the house some years previously. My first informant, Mrs. T., said: "One night, at about twelve o'clock, as I was coming home from a party, I saw, just about the place where your house now stands, the tall figure of a man with a tiny, rotund head. It seemed to rise out of the ground, and, striding forward with a slightly swaying motion, vanished over the cliff exactly opposite your front door. The night being moonlight, I saw the thing distinctly, and can well recall the horrible expression in its light, round eyes and leering mouth. It had small, bestial features, close-cropped hair, and a very grey complexion. Its arms and legs were abnormally long and thin. I should think it stood fully seven feet. I am sure it was nothing

subjective, because when I rubbed my eyes it was still there; neither could it have been any one masquerading, as the cliff at that particular spot is fully forty feet high, and to have jumped, or even dropped over it, could not have been done without incurring serious injury. I did not learn till long afterwards that the cliff has long borne a reputation for being haunted."

My other informant, who had certainly neither met this lady nor heard her story, gave me an account of a similar experience she had had in the same place. Hence I am inclined to think that the house was haunted by an Elemental, either a Vagrarian or Vice-Elemental, that had been attracted thither either by the loneliness of the locality, or the barrow (to which I have alluded), or by the crimes formerly perpetrated on the cliff by wreckers.

It was in this house that I witnessed a manifestation prior to the death of a near relative of mine. As I have seen a similar apparition since, and have heard of a thing answering to the same description being seen separately by members of my family, I am inclined to classify it with Family Elementals, rather than to associate it with the Elemental I have just described.

The incident took place one morning at about

four o'clock. My attention being drawn to a bright object in one corner of my room, I sat up in bed and looked at it, when to my horror I saw a spherical mass of vibrating, yellow-green light suddenly materialise into the round head of Something half human, half animal, and wholly evil! The face was longer than that of a human being, whilst the upper part, which was correspondingly wide, gradually narrowed till it terminated in a very pronounced and prominent chin. The head was covered with a mass of tow-coloured, matted hair; the face was entirely clean-shaven. The thin lips, which were wreathed in a wicked leer, displayed very long, pointed teeth. But it was the eyes, which were fixed on mine with a steady stare, that arrested and riveted my attention. In hue they were of a light green, in expression they were hellish, for no other word can so adequately express the unfathomable intensity of their diabolical glee, and, as I gazed at them in helpless fascination, my blood froze. I do not think the manifestation lasted more than a few seconds, though to me, of course, it seemed an eternity. It vanished simultaneously with a loud and utterly inexplicable crash (as if countless crockery was being smashed) in the passage outside my

door. In the morning I learned of the death of a near relative who had died just at the time I witnessed the phenomenon.

A striking instance of another kind of phantasm, which I can only conclude is an Elemental of the order of Clanogrians, occurred quite recently. In a work of mine entitled "The Haunted Houses of London," published last year, I narrated an instance of a lady who, prior to the death of her husband, heard a grandfather clock (there being no clock of that description in the house), first of all, strike thirteen, and then, at intervals, several other numbers, which were subsequently found to denote the exact date of her husband's death.

Some months after the appearance of this book, I went to see "The Blue Bird," and found myself seated next but one to the lady who experienced the phenomenon of the clock. In between the acts she leaned forward to speak to me, and said: "Isn't it odd, I have heard that clock again, Mr. O'Donnell, and it struck thirteen just as before? And what is still more strange, a few days ago, as I was sitting in my drawing-room, I heard a gong—I have no such thing in my house—very solemnly strike a certain number of times, quite close to me.

Unfortunately, I did not count the strokes; but what do you think it means? "

I replied that I did not know; possibly, perhaps, the death of some relative. At the same time, I instinctively felt that the sounds foretold her own doom—a presentiment which, alas! was only too true, as Mrs. —— was killed a few days afterwards in a somewhat extraordinary taxi-cab collision in Portman Square. As Mrs. —— was a lady well known in Society, the accident was fully reported in several of the leading London dailies—in fact, that was how I first heard of it.

CHAPTER II.

PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING AND DEAD—DEATH WARNINGS AND DREAMS.

In one of my works I have alluded to the case of Miss D. (a signed account of which appeared in the October number, 1899, of the "Magazine for the Society of Psychical Research"), who unconsciously projected her superphysical body into the presence of four witnesses, including myself, and once when I was staying in Northampton a rather amusing incident with regard to projection happened to me. I went to Castle Street Station to see Mrs. W., a connection of mine, off, and as the train steamed out of the "bay," I was very much surprised to see her lean out of the window and wave to me. Of course, I waved back, but thinking such a proceeding on her part was most extraordinary, as I knew her to be extremely dignified, and averse to anything "tripperish," I made a note of the circumstance, and resolved to allude to it when next we met. I did so, but although I made use of all the tact I possess, Mrs. W. was

intensely annoyed, and, of course, indignantly denied having done such a thing. Now, was this a case of unconscious projection, or merely of suggestion? I am inclined to think the former.

The same thing happened at Temple Mead Station, Bristol, when I was again seeing Mrs. W. off to her home. This time I rubbed my eyes, and still her phantom was at the window, waving vigorously until the train had travelled some distance!

In an article specially written for "Cassell's Magazine" last year, I described how, on certain nights in the year (New Year's Eve for example), I have seen the phantasms of people destined to play some more or less important rôle in my subsequent life. I have referred to this peculiar form of phenomenon, too, in my book, "The Haunted Houses of London," and I am now afforded the opportunity of quoting a third instance. One New Year's Eve a few years ago I was at a small country station in the Midlands, waiting for the Birmingham train. As the weather was very cold and wet, there were few travellers, and the platform, gloomy and streaming with water, presented a singularly forlorn and forbidding appearance. Having been con-

fined indoors all day, I was glad to snatch any opportunity for stretching my limbs, and was pacing up and down in the rain, when I narrowly avoided collision with a very elegantly—though unseasonably—dressed lady. Apart from being pretty, she had a decidedly intellectual face, and I was so struck with her, that I admit I wheeled round with the intention of passing her again, when to my astonishment there was no one to be seen, and on my enquiring both of the station-master and solitary porter who the lady was, it was positively asserted that no such person had entered the station. Some months later, when taking tea at a club in Knightsbridge, I was introduced to Lady ——, whom I immediately recognised as the lady I had seen on New Year's Eve. I mentioned the incident to her, and she laughingly told me she had never been to such a place. Lady —— is now a great friend of mine.

Also the phantasms of people, who have at any time deeply impressed me, appear to me frequently. Some years ago I was always seeing the phantasm of H., a boy to whom I had the strangest aversion when I was at C. College. I recollect the first time I witnessed the phenomenon was in the High Street, Falmouth. I

was walking with an old school friend, now Major F., of the —— Regiment. Seeing H. suddenly cross the road very slowly in front of us, I exclaimed, "Why, how extraordinary! If that isn't H.! You remember H. at school, don't you? He hasn't altered in the slightest."

F. laughed. "What are you talking about?" he said. "I certainly do remember H., but he's not here. Whatever makes you think of him?"

I looked again, and the figure of H. had completely disappeared. Within that year I saw the phantasm of H. five or six times, but always in different places, and always when my thoughts were far removed from him. The question now arises as to whether what I saw was subjective or objective; if the former, whether it was due to telepathy, suggestion, or hallucination; if the latter, whether it was superphysical or illusionary? Ande here again, I am inclined to attribute the phenomenon both to the objective and superphysical.

I have alluded in one of my former works to the only really satisfactory instance in which I have consciously projected my superphysical body, though I have made various attempts. My failures are, I think, due to the difficulty

I experience in obtaining the necessary conditions of perfect tranquillity of mind and absolute physical silence. An interesting experiment I have tried, and in which I hope eventually to succeed, is as follows:—I lean my forehead against the door of a room in which several people are seated with cameras. Concentrating tremendously hard, I bring before my mind a vivid picture of the contents of that room. The picture becomes clearer and clearer, until I can see every little detail in it, when I suddenly find myself passing through the door into the brilliantly illuminated space beyond. An instant more, and I feel my presence would be revealed to the sitters, but at the critical moment something mysterious happens, and my superphysical ego is sharply recalled to my physical body.

Before I refer to my experiences with phantasms of the Dead, I think some allusions to death warnings by dreams and otherwise may be of interest.

When I was a little boy, I well remember a Miss C. coming into the room in which I was sitting, and observing to my companion, "I am sure something is going to happen to my mother, for as I was crossing the road just now I distinctly saw her standing on the edge of the

pavement beckoning to me. As I approached, she suddenly vanished.

Two hours later Miss C. again came into my room. This time she was holding a telegram in her hand, and crying bitterly. "I was sure something would happen," she said: "my mother is dead. She died just about the time I saw her."

The house in which I was then staying was in Bath, and Miss C.'s mother died in Worcester.

The next instance of a phenomenon of this nature occurred years later, when I was an assistant master in a Preparatory School for the Royal Navy. I was chatting with the principal one night in his study, which was in the rear of the house, overlooking a somewhat dreary back garden. The headmaster was making some remark on the new regulations that were shortly to come in force with respect to the Entrance Examination to the *Britannia*, when he suddenly stopped short, and with a kind of gasping cry that made my blood run cold, pointed to the white window blind. "See!" he said, "see! it's my father! He's in his grave-clothes, signalling to me. Oh! my God! he must be dead!" He then sank back in his chair, breathing heavily. For some seconds

there was a silence which to me, at any rate, was most painful; he then exclaimed, "It's gone now. Did you see it?"

I replied that I had not seen anything except a violent agitation of the blind, which agitation, curiously enough, he had not noticed. The next morning he received a telegram saying his father was dead; the latter had died about the time his phantasm had been seen by his son.

Though I cannot say I have any great faith in the majority of omens, such as spilling salt and seeing magpies, nevertheless there are some to which I do attach importance. The same Miss C., to whom I have just referred, told me one evening that she had just seen a winding-sheet in the candle, and that it pointed towards her. That same night she dreamed one of her teeth came out, and on it was a portrait of her brother Jack. The following day she received a telegram to the effect that Jack had died suddenly from an attack of apoplexy.

I have frequently seen phantasms of the dead both in haunted houses and elsewhere. One of the best friends I ever had was "K.," who was a fellow student with me when I was reading in Dublin. K., who came of a very distinguished military family, and was the great-

nephew of the Baroness B., used often to chat with me about the possibilities of the future life.

"Look here," he said to me one night, "I'll make you a promise. If anything happens to me within the next few years I'll appear to you."

I laughingly told him I should be very pleased to see his ghost, and that I would do all I could to make it feel thoroughly at home. Some months later, "K." went to South Africa, where he eventually joined one of the Mounted Police Forces. One evening, when I was sitting alone in my room in D., I suddenly felt very cold, and on glancing towards the window saw a figure standing in the recess. Though the figure was misty, luminous, and not at all clearly defined, I had no difficulty in recognising it as the phantasm of "K.," who had certainly not been in my thoughts for some long time. He appeared to be wearing a khaki uniform, which was very much torn and blood-stained. His face was deathly white and shockingly mutilated, and his eyes, which were wide open and glassy, were fixed on me with a blank stare. It was a horrid spectacle, and I was so shocked that I fell back in my chair, feeling sick and faint. I do not think the manifestation lasted more than a minute at the most. A few days later, I read

in the papers that Major Wilson's party had been ambushed and cut to pieces on the Shangani River, and among the names of the victims was that of "K."

Another experience of this nature happened to me whilst I was staying in Northamptonshire. I was cycling along a road one very hot summer day, when I suddenly perceived, pedalling steadily away ahead of me, a cyclist in a grey suit. How he had got there was a mystery, for the road was straight, there were no turnings, and I had not seen him pass me. Moreover, there was something very odd both about the rider and his machine, for despite the dryness of the day, the man's clothes and bicycle were splashed with mud and dripping with water. Curious to see his face, I tried my hardest to overtake him, but fast as I went, the distance between us never seemed to decrease, although he apparently did not alter his pace. At last we came to a steep hill marked DANGEROUS, and I saw lumbering slowly up it a heavy drayman's cart. Without slacking speed the grey cyclist rode recklessly down, and, to my intense horror, dashed straight into the cart. Jumping off my machine, I placed it against the hedge, and ran to the cart, fully expecting to see the mangled

remains of the foolhardy rider. To my astonishment, however, there were no signs of him anywhere, and the driver of the vehicle was politely incredulous when I told him what I had seen. I subsequently learned, though not, I admit, on very reliable authority, that a cyclist had been killed on that hill two or three years previously, but whether the accident took place on a wet day, or whether the cyclist was clad in a grey suit, I could not ascertain.

An incident which I have omitted to mention in the proper order, namely, among phantasms of the Living, happened to me in a village near Yarmouth. I was on tour at the time, and had gone for a long walk on Sunday afternoon in the country. On my way back I arrived at the village of E., and as I was passing a very pretty thatched-roof cottage, saw, to my astonishment, an actress I had known on tour (and whose professional name was Ethel Raynor) standing on the path. She was holding both hands outstretched towards me, and in each of them was a large bunch of snowdrops. I saw her very distinctly, as she seemed to give out a light of her own, a bright white glow which emanated from every part of her body. Her features—she was a singularly handsome girl—were per-

fectly life-like, though the total absence of colour made her appear unnatural. Her eyes, which were dark and beautiful, were fixed on me with an expression of the utmost intensity, and from the slight movement of her lips I felt sure she wanted to say something. I stepped forward with the intention of addressing her, and the instant I did so, she vanished. On arriving at my rooms, I made a note of the occurrence in my diary, and was very surprised to hear that, instead of dying, Miss Raynor had married—her marriage taking place on the day I had seen her phantasm. Within a year, however, her husband deserted her, and she committed suicide!

With reference to dreams, there is a vast field for speculation. In a subsequent chapter I shall state a few of my theories regarding them. It will suffice here merely to enumerate a few instances from my own experience.

I once recollect having a very vivid dream in which I saw a man, with whom I was slightly acquainted, thrown from his horse and terribly mutilated. The horse looked so evil, and acted with such an extraordinary amount of diabolical cunning, that I have always felt suspicious of horses since. The dream was literally fulfilled.

I have often been warned against certain people in dreams, and found that these warnings were fully justified. For example, when I was the solitary guest of a man (who, by the way, was the nephew of a celebrated peer) abroad, I dreamed that my host came into my room and drew the picture of a crown on my mirror with a piece of red chalk. He then retraced his steps in silent glee, and as he closed the door behind him, the glass in the mirror gave a loud crack, and fell on the floor with a crash. I was so impressed with the dream that I became prejudiced in no slight degree against my host, and when the latter, a few days later, tried to persuade me to invest money in a mining enterprise in Cornwall, I refused; and it was very fortunate I did so, for the mine which had been opened with so much show and flourish failed, and nearly all the shareholders were ruined.

Many years ago I visited the State of B——, and shortly after my arrival at a farm, situated some distance from any settlement, I made the acquaintance of a neighbouring farmer and his wife, of the name of Coney. The Coneys, perceiving that I did not like my present surroundings, suggested that they should take me to the next Province in their waggon. I was to pay

them one and a half dollars a day, in return for which I was to receive such sleeping accommodation as the waggon could afford and full board. The route, they took very good care to assure me, was both beautiful and interesting. Crossing the C—— Mountains, and passing within sight of a famous crater lake and Lake D——, they would go through mile after mile of forest, teeming with big game and lovely scenery. As I was young (I was comparatively fresh from a Public School) and very fond of adventure, the prospect of seeing so much new country and of doing a little shooting appealed to me very strongly. Consequently, though I was by no means favourably impressed with the looks either of the farmer (a squat, beetle-browed man) or of his wife (a dark, saturnine woman with sly brown eyes and a cruel mouth), I was on the whole inclined to accept their offer. For the rest of the day after their visit I deliberated what I should do, and that night I had a very vivid dream. I saw myself lying asleep in a waggon which was standing close to the edge of a tremendous abyss. The horses, which had been taken from the shafts, were tethered to the trunks of two lofty fir trees, and close to them, engaged in earnest confabula-

tion, were the farmer and his wife. The moonbeams, falling direct on their faces, rendered both features and expressions clearly visible, and as I gazed into their eyes and recognised the intensity of their evil natures, my soul sickened—they were plotting to murder me. Gliding over the red-brown soil with noiseless feet, they crept up to the waggon, and seizing the individual I identified as myself by the head and feet, they hurled him into the chasm. There was the sound of a splash in the far distance—and—I awoke. My mind was now made up. I would remain where I was for the present, at least. And very thankful I am for the warning, since I afterwards learned that the Coneys bore a very sinister reputation, and that had I gone with them there is but little doubt they would have robbed and murdered me.

A friend of mine, who is an officer in the —— Regiment, dreamed three times that he was descending a road, at the bottom of which was a bridge overhead. When he came to the bridge, a man who was in hiding there rushed out and shot him. The scene was so real and the details so graphic that my friend was greatly impressed. One day, when he was walking in the South of Spain, he came to a dip in the

road, and there, before him, lay the scene he had seen so often in his dreams. He was now in some doubt as to whether he should go on, as he felt sure the person he had dreamed of would dash out on him. After some hesitation, however, he proceeded, and eventually arrived at the bridge. There was no one there, nor did he suffer any molestation whatsoever on his way home. It is impossible to explain why the dream should only have been verified in part.

I have many times dreamed I have been fishing in a wood by a waterfall, and so vividly has the scenery been portrayed that I have got to know every stick and stone in the place. So far, however, I have never come across the objective counterpart of that cascade. In other instances I have found myself visiting the actual spots I have seen in my visions. For instance, I constantly dreamed of a curious-looking red and white ship with two funnels, side by side, three masts and a hull, very high out of the water. Something always told me the vessel was for some peculiar use, but I could never discover what, neither could I make out the name which was written on her bows. I could read the first three letters, but no more. On arriving at a seaside town in the West of Eng-

land shortly after one of these vivid nocturnal visions, I saw a steamer in the bay which I instantly identified as that of my dreams, whilst to make me still more certain, the letters on her bows corresponded with those I had seen in my sleep. She had been specially designed as an Atlantic Cable boat!

Before going to America I distinctly recollect dreaming that I was standing by myself in the corridor of an enormous hotel. I saw no other visitors, only one or two porters in very faded uniforms, and instinctively felt that I was the only guest in the place. This feeling filled me with awe, and I was dreading the idea of spending a night on one of the deserted landings, when I awoke. On arriving in San Francisco some months later, I was conducted by a passenger agent to an hotel, which I at once recognised as the hotel of my dreams. There was the same tier upon tier of empty galleries, the same almost interminable succession of gloomy, deserted corridors and row upon row of gaping doors leading into silent, tenantless rooms, whilst to complete the likeness the hall porters wore exactly similar uniforms. From a variety of causes I was, so the clerk at the booking-office informed me, the only visitor in the building.

If dreams of present-day places have their objective counterparts, and dreams of future scenes are fulfilled, is it not feasible that dreams of the past should be equally veritable? I see no reason why it should not be so. I have often dreamed of ancient cities teeming with people clad in loose, flowing drapery and turbans, or tight hose and armour. I have rubbed shoulders with red-crossed knights, and followed in the wake of bare-headed monks and light-footed priests. I have gazed admiringly into the faces of fair ladies whose shining hair was surmounted with lofty, conical hats, and I have moved aside to make way for great dames on milk-white palfreys.

In my dreams I have lived in all ages, breathed all kinds of atmospheres, seen all kinds of events. One or two of these dreams haunt me now. I remember, for example, dreaming that I was in a very quaint old town covered with cobble-stones. I had a lady with me who was very near and dear to me, and my object was to protect her from the crowds of hustling, jostling merrymakers who crowded the thoroughfares. From the style of dress I saw on all sides, and which both I and my companion wore, I knew we were in the Middle Ages. But where we

were and what was going on I could not tell. After threading our way through endless narrow streets, lined with gabled wooden houses, whose upper storeys projected far over their entrances, we at length arrived at a big square in which a vast number of people were watching a show. There were three actors—a devil in a tight-fitting black costume and mask, and two imps in red, whilst the show consisted of the acrobatic performance of a number of tricks played by the imps on the devil, who apparently tried his level best to catch his tormentors, but always failed. Though my companion and I thought it extremely stupid, the crowd enjoyed it thoroughly, and I saw one or two stout red-faced women and several burly men-at-arms convulsed with laughter.

Suddenly, however, when the performance was at its height, there was an abrupt pause—two priests, with knit brows and glittering eyes, glided up to a girl, and, placing a hand on each of her arms, led her despairingly away, the crowd showing their approval of the act by shaking their fists in the poor wretch's face. Seized with a terrible fear lest my companion should likewise be taken, I hurried her away, and as we hastened along I heard the most fearful screams of agony.

On and on we went, until we came to an open space in the town, void of people, and surrounded by dark, forbidding-looking houses. I halted, and was deliberating which direction to take, when my companion clutched me by the elbow. I turned round, and saw, a few yards behind us, three priests, who, fixing their eyes malevolently on us, darted forward. Catching my companion by the hand, I was preparing to drag her into one of the houses opposite, when my foot slipped, and the next moment I saw her struggling in the hands of her relentless captors. There was a long, despairing cry—and I awoke. I have had this same dream, detail by detail, five times, and I know the faces of all the principals in it now as well as I know my own.

Curiously enough, I have dreamed of the same place, but at a different period. I have found myself walking along the quaint streets with a girl, whom I instinctively knew was my wife, past crowds of laughing, frolicing people dressed in the costume of the French Revolutionary period. We have come to the open space with the dark, forbidding houses, when I have slipped just as two savage-looking men in red caps have dashed out on us. My companion has attempted

to escape; they have pursued her, and with the wails of her death-agony in my ears I have awakened. Can it be that these dreams are reminiscences of a former existence, of scenes with which I was once familiar? Or have they been vividly portrayed to me by an Elemental? I fancy the latter to be the more likely.

Occasionally I have a peculiarly phantastic dream, in which I find myself in the depths of a dark forest, standing by a rocky pool, the sides of which are covered with all kinds of beautiful lichens. As I am gazing meditatively at the water, a slight noise from behind makes me look round, when I perceive the tall figure of a man in grey hunting costume, *à la* Robin Hood, with a bow in one of his hands and a quiver of arrows by his side. His face is grey, and his eyes long and dark and glittering. He points to the root of a tree, where I perceive a huge green wooden wheel, that suddenly commences to roll. In an instant the forest is alive with grey archers, who fire a volley of arrows at the wheel, and endeavour to stop it. An arm is thrown round me, I am swung off the ground, and when I alight on the earth again it is to find myself on a flight of winding stone steps, in what I suppose is a very lofty tower. The walls on

either side of me are of rough-hewn stone, and on peering through a small grated window, I can see, many feet beneath me, the silvery surface of a broad river and a wide expanse of emerald grass. I ascend up, up, up, until I arrive in a large room, brilliantly illuminated with sunbeams. Hanging on a wall is a picture representing a woman gazing at a grey door, which is slowly opening. On the door something is written, which I feel is the keynote to Life and Death, and I am endeavouring to interpret it when a hand falls on my shoulder. I look round, and standing beside me is the grey huntsman. I awake with his subtle, baffling smile vividly before me. A moment more and I might have been initiated into the great mystery I have long been endeavouring to solve.

I have little faith in dreams of marriages and deaths. They so seldom portend what they were once supposed to do. In my opinion, they are the suggestions of mischievous Elementals.

In concluding this chapter, I will describe a dream I had comparatively recently. I fancied it was late at night, and that I was on the Thames Embankment. The only person in sight was a well-dressed man in a frock-coat and silk hat, who was leaning over the parapet.

Feeling certain from his attitude that he was contemplating suicide, I yielded to impulse, and, walking up to him, said, "You seem to be very unhappy! Can I do anything for you?" Raising his head, he looked at me, when to my astonishment I at once recognised the grey huntsman I had seen in the dream which I have previously narrated. Complexion, hair, eyes, mouth, were the same—the expression alone differed. On this occasion he was sad. "You need not be afraid," he said. "I cannot put an end to my existence. I wish I could." "Why can't you?" I enquired with interest. And I have never forgotten the emphasis of his reply. "Because," he responded, "I am an Evil Force, a Vice Elemental."

Some months after this, when I was travelling one night from Victoria to Gipsy Hill, I had as my sole companion a well-dressed man in a soft Panama hat, who appeared to be occupied in a novel. I did not pay the slightest attention to him till the train stopped at Wandsworth Common, when he proceeded to get out. As he glided by me on his way to the door, he stooped down and, smiling sardonically, passed out into the darkness of the night. It was the man of my dreams, the huntsman and the would-be suicide!

PART II.

Phenomena Witnessed by Other People.

CHAPTER III.

"ELEMENTALS."

THE reticence people in general show towards having their names and houses mentioned in print has led me to substitute fictitious names in most of the cases referred to in this chapter.

In one of my former works I alluded to a phantasm with a pig's head I saw standing outside an old burial ground in Guilsborough, Northampton. Some years after the occurrence I was discussing the occult with my father-in-law, Henry Williams, M.D. (late of Chapel Place, Cavendish Square), and was very much surprised when he told me that he, too, had witnessed the same or a similar phenomena in Guilsborough. I append the statement he made with regard to it:—

"GUILSBOROUGH,
"NORTHAMPTON,
"*January 23, 1909.*

"I well remember many years ago, when a boy, running upstairs into the top room of a

certain house in Guilsborough and seeing a tall, thin figure of a man with an animal's head crouching on the bed. I was so frightened when I saw it that I ran out of the room as fast as I could.

"HENRY W. WILLIAMS, M.D."

My father-in-law had certainly made no mention of what he had seen to me before he heard my experience, neither had I the slightest idea that such a phantasm had been encountered in the village by any one but myself. Close to the house where he saw the phenomena I believe an ancient sacrificial stone was once found, whilst in the same neighbourhood there are the remains of a barrow and numerous other evidences of the Stone Age; hence the pig-faced phantasm may have been either a Vice Elemental attracted to Guilsborough by the human blood once spilt on the sacrificial stone, or by certain crimes committed in and around the village in modern times, or by the thoughts of some peculiarly bestial-minded person, or people, buried in the now disused cemetery; or, again, the phantasm may have been the actual earth-bound spirit of some very vicious person, whose appearance would be in accordance with the life he or she

led when on earth. Which of the two it is I cannot, of course, say: that is—for the present, at least—beyond human knowledge.

I have recorded another haunting of a similar nature.

Writing to me from Devizes on May 15th, 1910, Mr. "I. Walton" says:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I have just been reading your book, 'Haunted Houses of London.' It recalls to my mind a hideous apparition which I witnessed about ten days ago, and which made such an impression on my mind that I send you particulars of it.

"I was on a visit to my two sons, who live at No. 37, M—— Square, Chelsea. On the first night of my visit I slept in a room on the third floor facing the Square. I have no knowledge of the science you profess, and no personal faith in supernatural apparition, but the spectacle I witnessed was so extraordinary that, by the light of your thrilling narratives, it looks as though I may have been sleeping in a room that has been the scene of a tragedy.

"The room was not utterly dark, and some light penetrated from the lamps in the Square,

but as I lay with my face to the wall, all in front of me was dark.

"I fell asleep, and remained so for an hour or more, when I suddenly awoke with a great jerk, and found confronting me the most awful apparition you can imagine. It was a dwarfed, tubby figure with a face like a pig, perfectly naked, in a strong bright light. The whole figure resembled in appearance the scalded body of a pig of average size, but the legs and arms were those of a human being brutalised, male or female I could not say. In ten or fifteen seconds it vanished, leaving me in a profuse perspiration and trembling, from which I did not recover for some time. But I slept off the rest of the night.

"When the landlady came to call me (she slept on the third floor back) she pointed out that a picture on the connecting door had fallen down between my bed and the next room. Doubtless it was the fall of the picture that waked me up with a start. But what about the apparition? I can only assign it to some occult cause.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"'I. WALTON.'"

In this instance it is, of course, very difficult to tell whether the phenomena is Subjective or Objective. Presuming it to be Objective, which I am inclined to believe it was, then it was either the earth-bound spirit of some particularly vicious person who was in some way connected with the house, or else it was a Vice Elemental attracted to the house either by the foul thoughts of some occupant or by some murder formerly committed there.

Writing to me again on June 13th, 1910, Mr. "I. Walton" says:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I am quite willing that you should find a place for my experience in your forthcoming book. I think I omitted one detail of the spectre: it had bright yellow hair worn in ringlets extending barely as far as the shoulders.

"Yours faithfully,

"'I. WALTON.'"

Another case in which there is little or no doubt of the apparition being a Vice Elemental was related to me by Mrs. Bruce, whose husband was recently stationed in India. Her narrative is as follows;—

"We once lived in a bungalow that had been built on the site of a house whose inhabitants had been barbarously murdered by the Sepoys during the Indian Mutiny, and we had not occupied it many days before we were disturbed by hearing a curious, crooning noise coming from various parts of the building. The moment we entered a room, whence the noise seemed to proceed, there was silence, while the instant our backs were turned it recommenced. We never saw anything, however, until one day when my husband, hearing the sounds, hurriedly entered the room in which he fancied he could locate them. He then saw the blurred outlines of something—he could only describe as semi-human—suddenly rise from one of the corners and dart past him. The disturbances were so worrying that we eventually left the house."

In this case the amount of blood spilt on the site of the bungalow would in itself be a sufficient cause for the hauntings, and my only surprise is that it did not attract many more Elementals of this species.

Miss Frances Sinclair had an uncanny experience whilst travelling by rail between Chester and London last autumn.

On entering a tunnel, at about six in the evening, Miss Sinclair was quite positive there was no one in the compartment saving herself and her dog. Judge then her astonishment and dismay, when she suddenly saw, seated opposite her, the huddled-up figure of what she took to be a man with his throat cut! He had two protruding fishy eyes, which met hers in a glassy stare. He was dressed in mustard-coloured clothes, and had a black bag by his side. Miss Sinclair was at once seized with a violent impulse to destroy herself, and whilst her dog was burying its nose in the folds of her dress and exhibiting every indication of terror, Miss Sinclair was doing all she could to prevent herself jumping out of the carriage. Just when she thought she must succumb and was on the verge of opening the door, the tunnel ended, the phantasm vanished, and her longing for self-destruction abruptly ceased. She had never before, she assures me, experienced any such sensations.

Here, of course, it is impossible to say whether what she witnessed was Subjective or Objective, but assuming the latter, then I am inclined to think that the apparition, judging by its appearance and the desires it generated, was a Vice

Elemental, and not a Phantasm of the Dead. It need not necessarily have been attached to the compartment in which she happened to see it, but may have haunted the tunnel itself, manifesting itself in various ways.

An author, whom I will designate Mr. Reed, told me a few weeks ago, that he and his brother, on going upstairs one evening, had seen the figure of a man with a cone-shaped head suddenly stalk past them, and, bounding up the stairs, vanish in the gloom. Though naturally very surprised, neither Mr. Reed nor his brother were in the least degree frightened. On the contrary, they were greatly interested, as the phantasm answered so well to their ideas of a bogey! As both brothers saw it, and neither of them were in the least degree nervous, I am inclined to think that this phantom was a Vagrarian, and that its presence in the house was due either to some prehistoric relic that lay buried near at hand, or to the loneliness and isolation of the place.

Mrs. H. Dodd had a strange experience with an Elemental. "Waking up one night many years ago," she tells me, "I saw a tall figure standing by my bedside. It appeared to have a light inside it, and gave the same impression

that a hand does when held in front of a candle. I could see the red of the flesh and dark-blue lines of the ribs—the whole was luminous. What the face was like I do not know, as I never got so far, being much too frightened to look. It bent over me, and I hid my head in the bedclothes with fright. When I told my parents about it at breakfast, to my surprise no one laughed at me; why, I do not know, unless the house was haunted and they knew it. My brother said he had seen a tall figure disappear into the wall of his room in the night."

As Mrs. Dodd adds that a near relative of hers died about that time, it is, of course, possible that the phantasm was that of the latter, although from the possibilities of grotesqueness suggested by what she saw of the ghost, as well as from the fact that the house was newly built in a neighbourhood peculiarly favourable to Elementals, I am inclined to assign it to that class of apparitions.

Some months ago I received from the Baroness Von A—— the following account of a haunting experienced by her family:—

"DEAR MR. O'DONNELL" (she writes),

"I should be much obliged if you would

tell me the meaning of the things witnessed by my grandmother, Lady W——, widow of General Sir B. W——. I must first tell you that she was always a most truthful, sensible and unimaginative woman, that I am quite sure she would not have invented or added to anything she told so often. The story is thus:—

"During the fifties or sixties, she and my grandfather, then Colonel W——, went to stay with some very old friends of theirs, Colonel and Mrs. V——, at their place in the country: I forget the name, but think it was near Worcester. Neither of my grand-parents had ever heard of anything supernatural in connection with the V——'s house, yet my grandmother told me she felt a sense of the most acute discomfort the minute she entered her friends' house. This, however, passed off until, having occasion to go upstairs to her room after dinner to fetch her needlework, she felt it again on crossing the hall. Scarcely had she started to mount the stairs than she distinctly heard footsteps behind her. She stopped, so did they; so, thinking it a trick of imagination, she went on, when the footsteps went on, too. They could not possibly be the echo of hers, as she heard the sound of her own, and the others were

quite different, lighter and shorter. They followed her to the door of her bedroom, the door of which she quickly shut and bolted, as she was feeling very frightened, but all the time she felt the footsteps were waiting for her outside. At last she made up her mind to go down again, but scarcely had she emerged from her room and started to go down the corridor, when the footsteps recommenced. Thoroughly frightened, she ran to the drawing-room, never stopping till she was in the midst of her friends, but hearing all the while the light steps flying after her. They stopped only when she entered the drawing-room. On Mrs. V—— remarking on her pale face, my grandmother told her what had happened. Mrs. V—— then announced that the footsteps were a common occurrence, that nearly every one in the house had heard them, and that a thorough investigation had been made without result—there was no explanation. My grandmother heard the footsteps on several other occasions.

"The other manifestations occurred during her stay in the same house. It was some days after the last occurrence, that my grandfather had occasion to go up to town with Colonel V——, leaving my grandmother alone. Quite contrary

to her usual habit, when bedtime came she felt unaccountably nervous, and therefore asked a friend, Miss R——, who was also a guest at the V——'s, to stay with her for the night. They went to bed and to sleep, but not for long. They were both awakened by the clock on the landing outside striking twelve, when they both sat up in bed simultaneously, owing to their hearing the most unaccountable knocking over their heads, although, otherwise, the house was absolutely silent. They listened, and heard it again and again, and my grandmother said it sounded to them both as if nails were being driven into a coffin. The knocking continued for some time, until, unable to bear it any longer, Miss R—— jumped out of bed and said, 'Well! I'm going to see what it is; it is evidently coming from the room on the floor above, just over us, and I must find out.' My grandmother volunteered to go with her, and they crept up to the second storey, the knocking getting louder each step they took. On arriving at the door whence the sounds—which were very distinct now—proceeded, they found the door was locked, and as they turned the handle for the second time the knocking ceased, to be replaced by the most gruesome and hellish laughter. Too frightened

to go on with their investigations, they fled downstairs, the laughter continuing as they ran. Immediately they entered their room the knocking recommenced, and went on for a considerable time, and when it stopped, being both too frightened to sleep, they lit a lamp and talked till the morning. When the housemaid brought them their tea, she remarked on their worn looks, and on being told the reason, said, 'Oh, dear! That's Mr. Harry's room, and it's always kept locked when he is away. If only nothing has happened to him!'

"During the day a telegram came to say that the eldest boy, Harry, who was then in London, had died during the night; they did not even know he was ill.

"One thing I ought to mention is that a large cage of doves stood outside on the second floor landing. As a rule, these birds are frightened at the smallest sound, but my grandmother says she noticed that they never moved, although the noise of the knocking and laughter was enough to waken any one."

The Baroness Von A—— goes on to ask if I think the disturbances were due to Phantasms of the Dead or to Elementals. I told her that, in my opinion, the knockings and laughter were

due to one and the same agency, namely, that of an Elemental which had attached itself to the house in the same way as other Elementals —commonly known as Family Ghosts—attach themselves to families. Very probably the Elemental was attracted to the house in the first instance by some crime committed there, or it may even have been attracted to the soil prior to the building of the house. Such spirits vary in their attitude to Man. "The Yellow Boy," for instance, that haunted a certain room at Knebworth, appearing periodically to whoever was sleeping there, and by gestures describing the manner of their approaching death, did not, when giving the warning, exhibit any glee or malice: his actions were perfectly mechanical and his expression neutral. For example, when the apparition appeared to Lord Castlereagh, it merely drew its hand three times across its throat, thus predicting the way his lordship would die. (Lord Castlereagh shortly afterwards committed suicide by cutting his throat.)

Other cases of death-warning in which there is no apparent malice are "The Radiant Boy" at Corby Castle, when the apparition is benevolent rather than otherwise, and the "Drummer" at Cortachy Castle, when the phenomenon

appears to be mischievous rather than malicious.

On the other hand, that there is evil design and intention on the part of some death-warning phenomena is quite evident, to my mind, from the case of the clock to which I have alluded in Chapter I.; a case which also proves, I think, that the fates of some, if not indeed of all of us, are pre-ordained, and that there are certain orders of Elementals that not only have the power to warn us of these fates, but that can also be instrumental in accomplishing them. For instance, *re* the clock that struck thirteen, and the lady who was killed in the taxi-cab accident, it will be remembered that the latter was of a very extraordinary nature—so extraordinary, in fact, that it really seems as if the Elemental was the actual contriver of it—that it deliberately plotted the disaster, and that it was present at the time, predominating the thoughts and guiding the hands of the two drivers as they collided with one another. Why it did so is difficult to conceive, unless, preferring solitude for its domain, it regarded Mrs. Wright as an obstacle in its way, and an intruder where it had the sole privilege of haunting. Possibly, too, the house in which Mrs. Wright lived may be under some curse or ban, which necessitates

those having the temerity to occupy it, paying the penalty of so doing with their lives, the time and nature of their deaths being decided by the phenomenon in charge.

This supposition—namely, that Elementals can be instrumental in working evil—coincides with my theory that diseases are primarily due to powers or spirits antagonistic to the human race, and that such powers or spirits exist in multitudinous forms; but whereas Morbas have the widest range possible, the other two species of Elementals, *i.e.*, Vice Elementals and Clanograins, or Family Ghosts, are confined to certain families and houses.

Miss Rolands, a friend of mine, who is an artist, gives me an experience that once happened to her.

"I am afraid I will tell this story very badly," she begins, "but I will do my little best. I remember it all so well, though I was little more than a child at the time. I lived with my grandparents, aunts, and sister in an old house in Birkenhead. The house was a very high one. It had both attics and cellars, and in one of the attics there was a bloodstain, due, so I was told, to a murder of a particularly horrible nature, that had once been perpetrated

there, and on account of which the house was reputed to be haunted. Rumour said that in bygone days the house had been inhabited by priests, and that it was one of them who had been killed, his body being taken away in a barrel! In spite, however, of the bloodstain and the grim tales in connection with it, my sisters and I, at the commencement of our tenancy of the house, used to play in the attic, and nothing happened. But at last there came a night when we awoke to the fact that there was a ghastly amount of truth in what we had heard. Some time after we had all gone to bed, we were all aroused (even my practical old grandfather) by three loud knocks on one of the doors which each of us fancied was our own. Then there was silence, and then, from the very top of the house where the attic was situated, a barrel was rolled down the stairs!—bump! bump! bump! When it reached each separate landing, there was a short interval as if the barrel was settling itself before beginning its next journey, and then again, bump! bump! fainter and fainter, until it reached the cellar, when the sounds ceased.

When this stage was reached, we used to light tapers and all look out of our respective doors

with white scared faces and hair that literally felt as if it were standing on end, and then, after a few seconds of breathless silence we flew with one accord to one room, where we remained, packed like herrings, till the morning.

This strange, mysterious occurrence happened at least three times to my knowledge, and I can vouch for its absolute truth, as can my aunts and sister, and as could my grandparents, if they were alive.

Without any accurate details with regard to the murder, it is impossible to say definitely to what class of phantasms this haunting was due. One might attribute it entirely to the work of Impersonating Elementals, entirely to phantasms of the Dead, or to both Impersonating Elementals and Phantasms of the Dead.

I have recently been seeking for information concerning Pixies, and as the result of my enquiries have received replies from several people (whose social position and consequent sense of honour are a guarantee of their veracity) declaring they have seen this species of Elemental.

One of my informants, Miss White, who lives in West Cornwall, tells me that on one occasion, when she was crossing some very

lonely fields, almost within sight of Castle-on-Dinas, she suddenly saw a number of little people rise from among the boulders of granite on the top of a hill facing her; they were all armed with spears and engaged in a kind of mimic battle, but, on Miss White approaching them, they instantly vanished, nor did she ever see them again.

I can quite imagine that the hill, where Miss White alleges she saw these little phantasms, is haunted, as the whole of that neighbourhood (with which I have been acquainted for some years) is most suggestive of every kind of Elemental. There are, for example, on Castle-on-Dinas, the remains of an ancient Celtic village, and I have no doubt the locality has experienced many violent deaths, and that many prehistoric people lie buried there.

Another of my correspondents, Mrs. Bellew, says:—"In the winter of 1888-89 I was suffering from delicate lungs, and was advised to have a fire in my bedroom night and morning. One night, between eleven and twelve, I was awakened suddenly by a coal falling into the fender, and heard a small voice, resembling the squeaking of a mouse, say, 'We did that! you didn't know it,' then there followed shrill

laughter. I sat up in bed so as to command a view of the fireplace, and saw sitting on a live coal two little beings about six inches high, with human faces and limbs and white skins.

"Quite naturally I answered, 'I knew perfectly well it was you.' At the sound of my voice they vanished at once, and I, only then, realised how strange an experience I had had. The whole incident only occupied a minute or two."

Of course, it is very difficult to think that this was not entirely subjective, and were it not for the fact that Mrs. Bellew is so positive that the phenomena were objective, I should be inclined to believe otherwise. Still, it is very delightful to think there may be such a pleasant type of Elemental.

An interesting incident occurred to the Rev. G. Chichester, with whom I had some correspondence two years ago. It was the only psychic experience he had had, and took place at a Druid's Circle in the North of England. As he was examining the stones of the Circle, he suddenly became aware of a "death-like smell" (to quote his own words) and the sense of some approaching presence. Retreating hastily to a

distance, he then perceived a figure clad in white or light grey glide from the adjoining wood and vanish near the largest stone of the cromlech. The Circle was in a pine wood, and under one of the stones which had been dug up in the late seventies of the last century an urn had been found, which urn is now in a museum. The Rev. G. Chichester informed me that manifestations of an unpleasant nature had also followed the lifting of a stone in a celebrated cromlech in Cumberland, so that he was inclined to think psychic phenomena invariably followed the disturbance of any of the stones. Though Mr. Chichester did not give me any very definite idea of what he saw, it seems to me highly probable that it was a BARROWVIAN, or the phantasm of a prehistoric man; the latter, being thoroughly animal, would possess no soul, and his spirit would doubtless remain earthbound *ad infinitum*. On the other hand, of course, it might have been a Vagrarian.

Of the appearance of spirit lights I have had abundant evidence. Mrs. W——, of Guilsborough, with whom I am well acquainted, informs me that on awaking one night she found the room full of the most beautiful coloured lights, that floated in mid-air round the bed.

They were so pretty that she was not in the least alarmed, but continued to watch them till they suddenly vanished. The darkness of the night, the inclemency of the weather, and the situation of the room precluded the probability of the lights being produced by any one outside the house.

In the memoirs of a famous lady artist I have just been editing, I have given an account of blue lights seen by her and her husband in their bedroom. On this occasion the manifestations filled the eye-witnesses with horror, and the husband, in his endeavours to ward them off the bed, struck at them with his hand, when they divided, re-uniting again immediately afterwards.

I am inclined to think that in both instances the lights were due to the presence of some form of Elemental in the initial stage of materialisation; but whereas the beauty of the lights and the absence of fear in the first case suggests that the phantasms belonged to some agreeable type of Elemental, very likely of the order of Pixies, the uniform blueness and the presence of fear in the latter case suggests that the lights were due to some terrifying and vicious form of Elemental, that was in all

probability permanently attached to the house.

These lights seem to resemble in some respects those seen from time to time in Wales, though in the latter case the phenomena appear with the purpose of predicting death. A description is given of them in "Frazer's Magazine." They would seem to be closely allied with the corpse candles, or Canhyllan Cyrth, also seen in Wales, an account of which is given in "News from the Invisible World," a work by T. Charley, who collected his information (so I understand from an announcement on the title-page) from the works of Baxter, Wesley, Simpson, and other writers. These candles are so called because their light resembles in shape that of a candle; in colour it is sometimes white, sometimes of various shades of blue. If it is pale blue and small, it predicts the death of an infant; if big, an adult. The writer then narrates several cases relative to the appearance of these lights, the concluding one running thus: "About thirty-four or thirty-five years since, one Jane Wyatt, my wife's sister, being nurse to Baronet Rud's three eldest children and (the lady being deceased) the lady controller of that house, going late into a chamber where the maid-

servants lay, saw there no less than five of these lights together. It happened a while after, the chamber being newly plastered and a grate of coal fire therein kindled to hasten the drying up of the plastering, that five of the maid-servants went there to bed, as they were wont; but in the morning they were all dead, being suffocated in their sleep with the steam of the newly tempered lime and coal. This was at Langathen, in Carmarthenshire."

These lights do not appear to have ever reached any further stage of materialisation, though I imagine they possess that capability and that they are in reality some peculiarly grim form of Elemental—as grim, maybe, as the drummers and pipers of Scotland, and other Glanogrians or Family Ghosts, with which they would seem to be closely connected.

Of Noises, that are popularly attributed to Poltergeists, but which I think are due either to Phantasms of the Dead or to Vagrarian, Impersonating or Vice Elementals, I have received many accounts.

Miss Dulcie Vincent, sister to the Society beauty (whose experience I shall give later on), and herself a well-known beauty, says:—

"When I was staying with my uncle some

years ago in his house in Norfolk, we used to hear the most remarkable noises at night, which no one could in any way explain. For example, there were tremendous crashes as if all the crockery in the house was being dashed to pieces on the kitchen tiles, whilst at other times we heard heavy thuds and bumps as if furniture were being moved about wholesale from one room to another. One night, the noises were so great that my uncle took his gun and went downstairs, making sure that there were burglars in the house; but the moment he opened the door of the room whence the sounds proceeded, there was an intense hush, and nothing was to be seen. A few nights after this incident, I was awakened by hearing my bedroom door slowly open. I looked, but saw no one. Seized with ungovernable terror, I then buried my head under the bedclothes, when I distinctly heard soft footsteps approach the bed. There was then a silence, during which I instinctively felt some antagonistic presence close beside me. Then, to my indescribable terror, the bedclothes were gently pulled from my face, and I felt something —I knew not what—was peering down at me and trying to make me look. Exerting all my will power, however, I am thankful to say I

kept my eyes tightly closed, and the Thing at length stealthily withdrew, nor did I ever experience it again.

"My uncle's house was built on the site of some old cottages, in one of which lived a mad woman, but whether the disturbances were due to her phantasm or not, I cannot, of course, say."

Neither can I! though I should think it not at all improbable, as many hauntings of a similar nature are undoubtedly caused by the earth-bound spirits of the mad, which accounts for the senseless crashings and thumpings!

Miss Featherstone, a lady residing in Hampshire, has also had an experience with similar phenomena. "About six years ago," she informs me, "after my sister's death, I had a very unpleasant form of Psychism" (I quote her own words), "which has only lately ceased. Things used to disappear and reappear in a very strange way. Though it was apparently uncanny, it was, of course, difficult to prove absolutely they had not been moved by physical means. The first time the phenomena took place was during the visit of a very practical friend. She had been writing, and had put her materials together, and was walking out of the room, when her pen was whisked out of her

hand. She looked about everywhere, she shook her dress (which was quite a new one), but the pen had vanished—it was nowhere to be seen. Then she went upstairs, put on her walking shoes, hat, and gloves, and went to the railway station, came straight home, and, on taking off her outdoor things, discovered the missing pen inside a tailor's stitching across the front of her dress! She could not find any opening where it could have got in, and was obliged to unpick part of the dress to get it out. I wanted her to send an account of the incident to the S.P.R., but as she had a strong aversion to anything in the nature of publicity, I could not persuade her to do so. After this things constantly disappeared, and reappeared in a prominent position after every one had searched the place. I think, and hope, however, that this has now ceased, as it procured me a very bad reputation with several servants, who emphatically declared I was in league with the Evil One."

In a subsequent letter she writes:—"The house in which my Poltergeist experiences took place was in Dawlish, but the annoyances followed me to London. I had been sitting at friendly *séances* with one or two friends at that time. At the beginning the phenomena seemed

in some way associated with an old cupboard which I had bought second-hand, and which I still possess."

If the disturbances were not brought about by human agency, then I think it highly probable that both the *séances* at which Miss Featherstone had been attending and the oak chest may have been responsible for them. I am quite sure that whenever a genuine spirit manifestation takes place at a *séance*, that that manifestation is due either to the earth-bound spirits of people who were merely silly when in the body (and of these there have been, still are, and always will be a superabundance), to the earth-bound spirits of people who were bestial and lustful, or simply due to mischievous Impersonating and other kinds of Elementals. These latter, when once encouraged, are extremely difficult to shake off. They attach themselves to certain of the sitters, whom they follow to their homes, which they subsequently haunt. I have known many such instances; hence, I think it very probable that a mischievous Elemental attached itself to Miss Featherstone at one of the *séances* she attended, and, following her from place to place, pestered her with its unpleasant attentions. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the oak

chest was haunted by some species of Elemental, as is often the case with pieces of furniture, either old in themselves or constructed of antique wood—wood, for instance, that comes from a bog, an ancient forest, a mountain top, or any other spot frequented by Vagrarians.

Miss Featherstone gives me another experience she once had, and which is not without interest.

"About seven years ago," she says, "my two sisters and I were staying at a farmhouse near Chagford, on Dartmoor, between Thridly and Gidleigh. We started one day to walk to the latter place, and went through the village and up a lane beyond, on to the open moor, where we found ourselves on a level piece of ground, with Kes Tor close by to our left, whilst on our right were three new-looking houses, with little gardens and wicket gates leading to them. I went into one to enquire if there were any rooms to let for the following year, and was shown over it, while my sisters waited on the moor for me. Strange to say, I forgot to ask the name and address of the place, but it seemed on a perfectly straight road from Gidleigh. When we got back to Chagford, we asked our landlady where we had been, and she

said the name of the place was Berry Down; so the next year we wrote there for rooms, but on arriving were astonished to find quite a different place—not on the open moor at all. We then set about looking for the three houses we had seen. We walked round Gidleigh in every direction, enquiring of the postman, clergymen, farmers, and villagers, but none knew of any such houses, nor could we ever find the remotest traces of them. The day on which we saw them was bright and sunny, so that we could not possibly have been mistaken, and, moreover, we rested on the moor opposite them for some time, so that had they been mere optical illusions, we should have eventually become aware of the fact. Several old Gidleigh cottagers to whom we narrated the incident were of the opinion we had been 'Pixie led.' Is such a thing possible?"

There are instances I know—though I cannot at present recall one—where people have seen and entered phantom houses, just as sailors have witnessed the phenomenon of the phantom ship—which I have heard has been seen again comparatively recently off the North Cornwall coast—but whether such visions are due to Pixies, or any other kind of Elemental, I cannot, with

certainty, say. Taking into consideration, however, the numerous tricks Elementals do play, and how they very often, I believe, suggest dreams, I see no reason why they should not have been responsible for the delusion of the three cottages.

CHAPTER IV.

PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD.

THOUGH I head this chapter "Phantasms of the Dead," it is almost impossible to discriminate between Phantasms of the Dead, *i.e.*, the actual earthbound souls of the people, and Elementals, whose special function it is to impersonate them. In the case of murder, whereas, I think it quite possible that the spirit of the actual murderer appears, I think it highly unlikely that the soul of his victim (save, of course, where the latter has led a vicious life) is equally earthbound, but that what we see is merely an impersonating Elemental, who, in company with the earthbound soul of the homicide, nightly (or periodically) re-enacts the tragedy.

In cases of suicide, too, I think the nature of the Phantasms that subsequently appears largely depends on the life led by the suicide—if vicious the hauntings would be due to his earth-bound spirit, if moral to an Impersonating Elemental, but in either case Vice Elementals

would in all probability be attached to the spot, when the hauntings would at once become dual (which so frequently happens). Where the suicide is a criminal lunatic or epileptic imbecile, I believe the phenomenon seen is his or her actual spirit—I do not think such people have souls. By spirit, I mean the mere animal side of man's nature—that Force, which is solely directed to the attainment and furtherance of carnal desires; by soul, that Force, which recognizes and strives after all that tends to make the mind pure and beautiful.

With regard to wraithes, *i.e.*, apparitions seen shortly after death, I think that in the majority of cases at all events, it is the actual superphysical body of the deceased that appears, prior to its removal to other spheres, and that, except during this interval, the souls of the rational and moral never return to the material world. In all other cases of hauntings the phenomena are due either to the earth-bound spirits of the depraved, to the silly, *i.e.*, those who, without being actually cruel or lustful, have no capacity for the culture of mind; to criminal lunatics, and epileptic imbeciles; or else to Elementals, benevolent, neutral and otherwise.

CASES.

Mrs. P., the wife of an Army Medical Officer, living in my neighbourhood, says: "Some years ago I was travelling to Southampton, with my little daughter, a child of four. My nephew, who lived in Mare Street, Hackney, asked me to pass the night at his house. It was a large building, with long passages, out of which many doors opened, and, close to the back of it, there lay a cemetery.

"We arrived, to find no one at home but the servants. My nephew had left a message for me, asking me to make myself thoroughly 'at home' and go to bed, if I felt tired after the journey.

"My little daughter and I shared a big room with a double bed. I did not sleep for some time on account of a curious noise. Though there was no wind, all the doors in the passage rattled on their hinges and bumped about, as if someone was going along trying the handles. The noise lasted for some time, and disturbed me a great deal so that I did not sleep at all well.

"In the morning my nephew said, 'Well, Aunt, I hope you were comfortable and had a

good night?' 'Oh, everything was comfortable,' I replied, 'but I did not pass a good night. There is something very strange about the doors in your upstairs passage. They seemed to be kicking about on their hinges for hours.'

"He looked at me in rather a curious way, and said, 'I suppose you did not know that my mother died in the room where you slept—in fact, in the very same bed.'

"'Indeed, I did not,' I answered, 'and, if I had known it, I should never have accepted your hospitality.'

"Well, I went on my journey to India, and thought no more about the matter. But, when I returned, a year or two later, I happened to speak of it to one of my nieces, who instantly gave me her experience in the same house.

"'After our mother died,' she said, 'the room was shut up and it remained so for some time. Then my sister and I decided that we should use it, and we slept there together. The first night we were not disturbed, but the second night I woke and saw our mother sitting in a chair before the large dressing glass. My sister was asleep, but I suppose I must have made some movement which roused her, for

she awoke, and, without a word from me, cried out—'There's mother! Mother has come back to us!' Thus, you see, we both saw the apparition plainly and had not the least doubt as to who it was."

The manifestations in this case were, I think, due to a benevolent Elemental that impersonated the dead lady with the object of conveying some message from the soul of the latter to her living relatives and friends. The impression conveyed by the phenomenon to the girls, would be that their mother was still cognisant of them; whilst the Elemental would, in all probability, find some means of communicating the welcome tidings to the mother that her daughters had not forgotten her.

Mrs. P—. narrated to me another case. "My husband," she said, "attended a certain old man and his wife who were very devoted to one another. They were quite elderly people, but sound and sane—not at all fanciful or inclined to be foolish. When the old man died, his wife felt his loss most dreadfully. She never quite got over it, and, when she took to her bed with her last illness, she was constantly saying that she wished she could see her husband again. Her attendants told her

that she ought not to say such a thing, but the wish grew upon her, till, one day, being alone, she spoke to him and begged him to come back.

"Immediately he appeared to be sitting in a chair by her bedside. But, though her wish was gratified, she was terrified.

"'Go away, go away!' she cried, 'I don't want you.' The vision vanished. Some few days later, she died. I often used to sit with her, and I am sure that she was quite reasonable and in full possession of her wits."

Here, of course, one has to entirely depend upon the evidence of the deceased who, being ill at the time, might easily have been the victim of an illusion—at least so it seems to me. I merely quote the case to show that I am not always ready to accept as objective the phenomena witnessed by a single individual.

The case of Miss V. St. Jermyn, a lady living in the North of London, is a great deal stronger.

"My father," she says, "was the Rector of an immense parish, which was divided at his death. He had ten curates. The senior curate, who was appointed to succeed him in the more important division, was shortly afterwards made

a Canon, so I shall speak of him as Canon Jervis. He owed everything he had to my father, and he was always ready to say this and talk of his obligations to my father. I mention this to show the sort of regard he had for my father. We on our side, my brothers, sisters and I, always looked on him as a very great friend, having known him all our lives. There was never anyone with whose appearance we were more familiar, and he certainly was rather remarkable looking. Standing at least six feet and proportionately broad, he had a square face, rough hewn features and very thick crêpé hair, which was getting grizzled. He was always very well dressed. Everyone was much struck with his appearance and I was constantly being asked who he was.

"Early one January (about the 3rd, I think), some years ago, he died, and we were all so grieved that we at once wrote expressing our sympathy to his family. We certainly thought about him a good deal, though his death was not one of those great sorrows which leave no room in one's mind for the remembrance of anything else.

"About the 13th of February (of that year), my brother, sister and myself went to tea with

a friend, a well-known artist at the Pembroke Studios, Kensington. It was a very pleasant party and we stayed late; indeed, we were nearly the last to leave. For about fifteen minutes before we left the Studios, I was talking to our host, who was showing us a curious old French bible with coloured illustrations. I mention this to show how my mind had been engaged.

"After leaving the studio, on our way to the High Street, Kensington, we had to pass along one side of Edwardes' Square. There the houses have little gardens with iron railings and the pathway is very narrow. We were walking one after the other, my brother in front, my sister next, and I last, when, suddenly, I saw Canon Jervis as clearly and plainly as I have ever in my life seen anyone before or since. He passed me on the side next the railings. I cannot in any way explain why I did, or said, nothing at the time, saving that I was too overcome with amazement. We went on and got into an omnibus, which took us to the street where we live. As we walked along the latter, I again saw the Canon coming down a side street and my sister immediately exclaimed: 'There is Canon Jervis! looking just as if he were alive!' My brother, who was a little way

in front of us, did not speak—he had seen nothing.

"Looking back on the incident I cannot explain why we neither attempted to look after or follow him. But I think most people at the time of seeing an apparition seem to be in a sense paralysed with astonishment and quite lose their presence of mind."

As the manifestation occurred so soon after the Canon's death, I am inclined to think that in this instance it was a *bona fide* phantasm of the Dead.

A case of a haunting with a purpose was related to me recently by a Mrs. Craven. Whilst visiting at a country house, Mrs. Craven often used to retire to the library for a few minutes' quiet reading, when she invariably found a priest sitting there, in a peculiarly pensive attitude. Wondering who he was, as she never saw him in any other part of the house, but not liking to disturb him, Mrs. Craven used to sit and steal furtive glances at him from over her book, until she felt she could no longer stand being in his presence, when she made her escape as silently as possible from the room. This went on for some days, until determining one morning to brave it out, she remained in her

seat till the priest somewhat electrified her by suddenly pointing in a very agitated manner to the book shelves. Thinking him queerer than ever, but attributing his inertness to some possible physical affliction, Mrs. Craven went to the bookcase and after some trouble discovered the book he wanted. But on bringing it to him, he motioned her to turn over the leaves, and to her astonishment the book seemed to open at the place he indicated, where she perceived a loose sheet of paper covered with writing. Obeying his tacit injunctions she threw the document into the fire, whereupon the priest at once vanished.

Much startled, Mrs. Craven related what had occurred to the hostess, who coolly informed her that the library was well known to be haunted by just such an apparition as she had described, which, however, only appeared periodically. So far, Mrs. Craven does not think it has been seen again.

The identity of the priest being unknown, one cannot say for certain whether this phenomenon was a phantasm of the Dead or an Impersonating Elemental, though, from the lives of self-indulgence led by so many priests in the past, I am inclined to believe it was a genuine

phantasm of the Dead. I think the incident of the document is quite sufficient in itself to prove the manifestations were objective.

There is a well authenticated story current in Clifton (Bristol) of an apparition appearing (in the home of a well-known professional man) comparatively recently, with a purpose.

Miss Debrett, an artist belonging to one of the Cornish Art Colonies, had a curious experience at Moret, which experience I will tell in her own words:—

"From Paris to Moret-sur-Loing is not a very long run, two hours at the most. My friend, an artist, and myself went there in the month of July. We 'put up' at the Hotel de la Chalette. We had rooms adjoining one another, my friend using hers as a studio in the daytime. My room was very close, the roof sloped horribly and I experienced a queer shrinking sensation the moment I entered it. However, overcoming such feelings I resolved to sleep there and say nothing of my misgivings to my friend. At two o'clock in the morning of my first night there, I was awakened by little tappings and a feeling of terror. I tried in vain to sleep but could not, the presence of some ghost-like creature was strongly about me. I

lit my candle and placed it on the stand beside my bed, trying to assure myself that this at least would protect me from apparitions, but the feeling of the invisible presence remained. I was immeasurably relieved when morning came, though I did not mention a word of what had happened to my friend.

Night after night the sensations were repeated with ever increasing intensity, until I could instinctively feel the presence of a woman who appeared to be enduring the most severe mental and physical pain. I could feel her close to me, bending backwards and forwards and writhing to and fro, and a deadly fear seized me lest she would clutch hold of me in her throes of agony. Once I saw her shadow on the wall. Apart from the unmistakeable likeness it bore to a woman, I am sure it was her shadow, as I looked carefully about the room, removing sundry articles of furniture to assure myself the phenomenon was not due to them. It was not, for whatever I did in no way disturbed it—it still remained plainly and ominously outlined on the wall.

"About the second week of my stay in Moret-sur-Loing, I was taken ill with a violent cold and feverish pains. I could not discover

any cause, though my friend attributed it to a night's rowing on the river Loing. For a few days I was confined to my room and my only consolation was to look at a little pot of flowers which I had bought at the local market. The flowers were bright scarlet and in pleasant contrast to the general gloominess of the apartment. At last, however, utterly worn out with my illness and the long succession of harassing nights, I persuaded my friend to leave the hotel, which she reluctantly did, and we returned to England.

"On our way home we met a fellow artist who told us she had also been staying quite recently at Moret, and then it transpired that she, too, had had rooms at the Hotel de la Chalette, but had given them up as they were so depressing. Upon hearing this I related my experiences, whereupon she exclaimed, 'How odd! A girl whom I knew very well used to go very often to the Hotel de la Chalette, and occupied the very room you slept in. She was very much attached to the place and when she was dying in England continually expressed a longing to be there. She died in the very greatest agony—just such agony as that of the woman you describe—and fought against death

to the very last. She was most unresigned and rebellious. I wonder if the sensations you experienced were in any way due to her?' "

I think so without a doubt, and that the phantasm Miss Debrett saw is either that of the earth-bound spirit of the unhappy girl who, when dying, wished herself at the Hotel de la Chalette, or that of an impersonating Elemental; —let us hope it is the latter. Death wishes are, I am sure, frequently fulfilled, and, consequently, cannot be regarded both by utterer and audience with too much seriousness. The strong desire of the girl to cling to life—on this earth—proving that her spiritual aspirations were strictly limited—was almost a sufficient guarantee that her spirit would remain earth-bound.

Miss Viola Vincent, a well-known Society beauty, has furnished me with an account of a house presumably haunted by a Phantasm of the Dead. It is a large country house not very far from London, and the case was reported to Miss Vincent by an old servant of the name of Garth. Garth, who had no idea at the time that the house was haunted, was taking a short nap on her bed one afternoon when she heard the door slowly open and on looking up, saw

to her astonishment a little sinister old man, who tiptoed up to her bed and, leaning over her, placed his finger on his lips as if to enjoin silence (an unnecessary precaution as Garth was far too terrified either to utter a sound or to move). On perceiving her fright, a subtle smile of satisfaction stole over the man's face, which Garth describes as yellow and wizened. He left the bed and, turning round, glided surreptitiously through the open doorway. Greatly mystified, Garth mentioned the affair to the other servants, who, instead of laughing at her, at once exclaimed, "Why, you've seen old S——. He committed a murder, just outside the door of your room, many years ago, and is frequently seen about the house and grounds. If you examine the boarding in the passage carefully, you will see the bloodstains." As Garth refused to sleep in the room again, a valet of one of the visitors was put there, and he experienced precisely the same phenomenon.

Garth constantly saw the phantasm of the man in various parts of the building. Sometimes she would meet him face to face on a staircase, sometimes he would creep stealthily after her, down one of the numerous, gloomy corridors. Indeed, she never seemed to be free

from him, and, in the end, her nerves became so upset that, although the situation was an excellent one, she was obliged to relinquish it. When in the orchard, Garth, on several occasions, heard the sound of galloping horses and saw the misty figures of two people engaged in earnest conversation. On approaching them, however, they invariably melted into fine air. Miss Vincent enquired into the case, and, eventually, got into communication with other people who had witnessed the same phenomena.

I think it is highly probable that the apparition of the old man, at any rate, was a phantasm of the dead, that is to say, the earth-bound spirit of the murderer; for despite the tendency there is nowadays for pseudo-humanitarians to sympathise with the perpetrators of revolting and cruel murders, it is very certain that the Higher Occult Powers hold no such erroneously lenient views, and that he who spills human blood is bound by that blood to the earth. Hence murderers—or at least such murderers as are not genuinely repentent—are chained for an unlimited time to the scenes of their crimes, which they are compelled willy-nilly to re-enact nightly.

Another case of haunting by the phantasm

of a murderer, or murderers, was told me by Miss Dalrymple, aunt of the famous singer, T. C. Dalrymple. Her experiences began the night of her arrival at "The Lichens," the house her nephew was then renting, near Felixstowe.

On retiring to rest she found the servants had made a very big fire in her room, and growing somewhat apprehensive about it, she got out of bed and took some of it off. Then, thinking that her alarm was rather foolish, and that, as there was a proportionately large fender, no danger could possibly arise, she put the coal on again and got back into bed. A few minutes afterwards the room was pervaded with a current of icy cold air, that blew over the bed and rustled through her hair. The next instant, she felt a cold, heavy hand laid on one of her shoulders, and she was steadily and mercilessly pressed down and down. Her terror was now so intense that she could neither move nor articulate a sound, and she could almost hear the violent palpitation of her heart. After what seemed to her an eternity, but which was, in all probability, only a few seconds, the hand was removed, and Miss Dalrymple then heard seven loud thumps on the table at the foot of the bed, after which there was silence, and the

manifestations ceased. Miss Dalrymple, however, was too upset to sleep, and lay awake all night in a great agony of mind, lest there should be any further disturbances. When the maid brought her some tea in the morning, the latter immediately exclaimed, "Oh, madam, how dreadfully ill you look!" to which Miss Dalrymple replied, "Yes! I have been feeling very ill, but do not, on any account, tell your master or mistress, as it will only worry them."

Miss Dalrymple then took one of the older servants into confidence, and asked her if the house was haunted.

"Well, madam," was the reluctant response, "people do say that there is a house in this village that is haunted by the ghost of a murdered lady, but I am not quite sure which house it is"—an answer which implied much.

Miss Dalrymple did not have any further experiences there herself, but some time afterwards one of her great-nieces remarked to her, "Did you know, auntie, 'The Lichens' was haunted?" and went on to say that on one occasion, when going upstairs, she had seen the figure of a woman in a grey dress bending over the basin in the bath-room as if engaged in rinsing her hands. Thinking it was the head nurse,

she was going on her way unconcernedly when she saw the nurse coming towards her from quite a different part of the house. Greatly astonished, she at once made enquiries, in reply to which the nurse assured her that she had not been in the bath-room for at least an hour. The figure in grey was repeatedly seen, always in or near the bath-room, and always appearing as if rinsing her hands. Once, too, when one of the children was alone in a downstairs room that opened on to the lawn, a hideous, trampish old man, carrying a sack, approached the window, and, after peeping in at the child with an evil smile, placed his fingers knowingly alongside his nose and glided noiselessly away into the shrubbery. The child ran out at once and asked the gardener to look for the man, but despite a vigorous search, no such person could be found.

Another inmate of the house, on going one day to her bedroom, heard something behind her, and, turning round, perceived, to her unmitigated horror, the luminous trunk of a man, which had apparently been dismembered. The body, which was bobbing up and down in mid-air, approached her rapidly, and, moving aside to let it pass, she saw it vanish through the

door of the room Mrs. Dalrymple had occupied. After this ghastly manifestation, T. C. Dalrymple, Esq., fearing, for the sake of his family, to remain any longer in such a place, left "The Lichens," part of which has since been pulled down and rebuilt. Miss Dalrymple's heart has never been sound since she felt the ghostly hand on her shoulder, the horror of which phenomenon, as any of her friends can testify, turned her hair white.

As to the cause of the hauntings, that must be entirely a matter of conjecture, since, with regard to the former history of the house, nothing definite is known. A very vague rumour is current that many years ago it was the *rendezvous* of all manner of rips and *roués*, and, strange though it may seem, the fact that the phantasm of the woman, seen there, was wearing a modern costume, does not preclude the idea that the said phantasm belonged to a bygone period. Such an anachronism is by no means uncommon in cases of haunting, but it renders the task of theorising on ghostly phenomena all the more difficult.

It may be asked with regard to this case—had the phantasm of the woman any connection with that of the tramp, the mutilated body and

the hand; and my answer to that question is, that all four phenomena were, in all probability, closely allied with one another. Very possibly an old man had been murdered there by his paramour, who, after cutting up his body, had bribed a tramp to dispose of it, in which case the house would, of course, be haunted by the earth-bound spirits of both the victim and agents of the crime. But it is quite possible, supposing the phenomena are genuine phantasms of the dead, that the tragedy did not take place in that house at all, but was enacted in some far-away spot, one or more of the principals being in some way connected with "The Lichens." However, as I have already said, it is one of those cases that must, by reason of the uncertain history of the house, always remain a mystery.

A haunting of a similar nature occurred quite recently at a house near Leeds. The place, which had stood empty for a very long while, was eventually taken on a lease by my informants, Mr. and Mrs. Urquhart. Neither of the latter had had any previous experience with the superphysical, at which both were more or less inclined to scoff. One evening, shortly after their arrival, Mrs. Urquhart was alone in the study, and, looking up from her needlework,

saw what at first sight appeared to be a luminous disc—but which speedily developed into a head —emerge from the wall opposite, and, bobbing up and down in mid-air, slowly approach her. It was a woman's head, the woman having obviously been decapitated, the expression in the wide open staring eyes showing every indication of a cruel ending. The hair was long and matted, the skin startlingly white. Mrs. Urquhart was at first far too terrified to move or utter a sound, but as the ghastly object floated right up to her, the revulsion she experienced was so great that the spell of her inertness was broken and she fled from the room.

When she told her husband what had occurred, he exclaimed laughingly, " Why, my dear, I never knew you had such a vivid imagination! You will soon be asking me to believe in hobgoblins and pixies." Whereupon Mrs. Urquhart bit her lips and was silent.

However, after dinner Mrs. Urquhart, hearing a great commotion in the study, ran to see what was happening, and discovered her husband and his friend, looking ghastly white, thrashing the air with walking-sticks. Catching sight of her, they both cried out, " We've seen the head— the beastly thing came out of the wall,

as you described, and floated towards us!"

On hearing this, Mrs. Urquhart recoiled in horror, nor could she be persuaded ever again to enter the room. Her husband, whom the experience had effectually cured of scepticism, at once fell in with her proposal that they should immediately quit the house, and soon after their removal they learned that the place had been pulled down. From the fact, revealed by subsequent enquiries, that some years previously an old woman had been murdered there, it is quite evident to my mind that what the Urquharts and their friend saw was both objective and superphysical; but whether the apparition was a phantasm of the dead, or an impersonating elemental, can only be decided by an adequate knowledge of the character of the murdered person in whose likeness the phenomenon appeared.

Hauntings of a very disturbing nature go on (or, at least, did so a short while ago) at a house in Rugeley, where dreadful groans are frequently heard proceeding from a room on the ground floor. My informant, however, would not say whether or not the house was the one in which the notorious Palmer poisoned his victims; but here again it seems more than

probable, that the sounds are due to the presence of an Elemental attached to the spot by the sacrifice of human blood.

I am hoping, at no great future date, to make a series of investigations in houses that have been the scenes of unsolved mysteries, since I believe it quite possible that I should experience such superphysical demonstrations as would give me the direct clue to the identity of the perpetrators of the crimes.

VISIONS AND DREAMS.

The Baroness Von A——, in a recent letter to me, says:—"I wonder if it would interest you to hear of a rather strange occurrence that once befell my husband. He was staying in town at the time, and was asked to tea at the house of some friends of ours in Westminster. The name of the friends is Howard, and their house, which is very old, is in one of the old squares behind the Abbey. My husband, an absolute sceptic himself, knew that the Howards were interested in Psychical Research, but had never heard of any legend in connection with their house. One evening, after tea, which took place in a back room, my husband, more

in a teasing spirit than anything else, suddenly exclaimed, 'Look here! Shall I tell you what I can see in this room?' (He is most insistent that at the time he spoke he saw nothing, but was preparing to make the whole thing up, and meant to tell the Howards so afterwards.) 'I seem to be standing in a small garden. It is a dark night, and I see two men, dressed in the fashion of Charles II.'s time, just finishing digging a small grave, near the edge of which another man is standing holding in one hand a lantern of antique design. The two men have finished, the third waves his lantern slowly, and the door of the house which faces me (I feel it is this house, albeit somewhat different, though how I cannot say) opens, and out of it comes a fourth man, also dressed according to the Charles II. period, though in a very much richer costume. There is an expression of diabolical satisfaction in his eyes as they dwell on the face of the child he is carrying in his arms, and which, to my horror, I see has been murdered. The villain approaches the grave, into which he ruthlessly drops the body, and the diggers at once cover it with shovels full of earth. That is all I can see.'

"To my husband's astonishment the Howards

were wildly excited, and told him that the legend connected with the house (and which they believed was only known to one or two people besides themselves) tallied detail for detail with the vision he had just witnessed. It was quite in vain that he protested he had seen nothing at all, but had invented the story just to 'have them on'—they would not believe him. It appears that in the time of Charles II., another house had occupied the site of the present one, though the garden was practically the same. A child had been murdered there for its inheritance, and had been buried in the garden where its bones had been subsequently found, after which the house had been pulled down and the present one built. I am sure my husband honestly thought he was inventing the vision. Could it have been a case of suggestion?"

Yes, I am inclined to believe it was a case of suggestion, but of suggestion due to some superphysical objective presence that actually put the words of the story into the mouth of the narrator. I do not think the story was a chance invention, a mere coincidence, any more than I think the suggestion was telepathic.

My next case deals with a dream, a lady, of

the name of Carmichael, had whilst staying in an old house in the Punjab. She dreamed she was awakened by a lovely Hindoo lady, who came to her bedside, and by signs implored her to follow her. This Mrs. Carmichael at once did, and the Hindoo led her down winding passages and through numerous rooms, until they at length arrived in a courtyard with a well at the far end of it. The Hindoo silently and mournfully approached the well, and, pointing down it, wrung her hands and disappeared.

Mrs. Carmichael then woke to find herself bathed in perspiration; and the dream made such an impression on her that when she went to stay with some friends the next day, she told them about it. To her astonishment they were intensely excited. "Why!" they exclaimed, "we know the place well, and you have described exactly the winding passages in that part of the house that has never been used since a Hindoo lady was murdered there for her jewels some years ago. Neither the murderer nor his booty was ever found."

It was now Mrs. Carmichael's turn to be amazed, and she readily agreed to go with them to the house to see if she could find the well she had seen in her vision. Accordingly

they all set out, and, on reaching the house, appointed Mrs. Carmichael as guide. Without any hesitation she at once made for the disused wing, and, leading the party through the rooms and down the passages she had seen in her dream, eventually brought them to the well in the courtyard. The well was then dug, and at the bottom lay a number of valuable diamond and pearl necklaces, rings and ear-rings! No body, however, was found, but when Mrs. Carmichael slept in the house again she dreamed no more of the Hindoo lady.

I unhesitatingly vouch for the truth of this story. The question now arises—to what cause could the vision be attributed? Was it due to a telepathic communication from some living brain acquainted with the story, or did Mrs. Carmichael's superphysical body leave her material body and visit the scene she witnessed, or was it all suggested to her by some objective superphysical presence, presumably that of an impersonating and benevolently disposed Elemental? I am inclined to think the last theory the most feasible.

An account of another interesting dream has been sent me by Miss Featherstone, several of whose other psychic experiences I have already

related. "In a dream," she says, "which occurred twenty-three years ago, I thought I was very much upset and worried, and was running up and down passages which I had never seen before, looking for something (I am not sure that I knew in my dream what I was looking for), and being unable to find it, I exclaimed, 'Oh! I do wish Arthur was here!' I woke up saying this. Some months afterwards I was staying with a cousin in Worcestershire, when she had an epileptic fit. All the servants were out excepting two young girls. The doctor came and ordered brandy, and I could not find the key of the cellar anywhere. I had never explored the downstairs of my cousin's house before, and as I raced down a long succession of passages in my search for the cellar key, I instantly recognised and identified the passages with those I had seen in my dream. Moreover, to make the resemblance still more striking, my cousin Arthur, who alone knew where the key was kept, was away, and I kept saying to myself, 'I would give anything if only Arthur were here!' Later in the day he returned with the key in his pocket."

In this instance I think the superphysical body of Miss Featherstone, under the guidance

of an Elemental, separated itself from her material body whilst the latter was asleep, and visited the actual spot where the incident of the key took place. As to why the Elemental should then have initiated Miss Featherstone into the trivial details only of an incident of the future, it is impossible to explain. One can only surmise that the act was an inconsequent one on the part of the Elemental, or that it would have revealed more to her had not some unexpected interruption recalled Miss Featherstone's superphysical self.

PART III.

CHAPTER V.

THE HAUNTINGS OF THE OLD SYDERSTERNE PARSONAGE (1833), NEAR FAKENHAM, AND A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN SYDENHAM.

Some weeks ago the Rev. Henry Hacon, M.A., of Searly Vicarage, North Kelsey Moor, wrote to me, very kindly enclosing the following interesting letter which his father, many years ago, had received from the Rev. John Stewart, M.A., at that time Rector of Sydersterne, near Fakenham.

The letter, which deals exclusively with the then very much discussed hauntings at Sydersterne Parsonage, runs thus:—

Sydersterne Parsonage,
near Fakenham,
May 22, 1833.

My dear Sir,

All this Parsonage circle were gratified to learn that you and your family were recovered from the late epidemic. We are very sensible

of your kind wishes, and shall be happy to see you at any time your press of business may allow you to leave Swaffham. The interest excited by the noises in our dwelling has become quite intense throughout this entire district of country. The arrivals from every quarter proved at last so utterly inconvenient that we have been obliged to decline receiving any more. We were compelled to draw the line somewhere, and we judged it could not be more sensibly done than immediately after the highly respectable authentication of the noises furnished last Thursday.

On the night preceding and the Thursday morning four God-fearing, shrewd, intelligent brother clergymen assembled at the Parsonage, and together, with a pious and accomplished lady and a medical gentleman from Holt (of eminence in his profession), joined Mrs. Stewart, my two eldest boys and myself, in watching. The clergymen were those of St. Edmund's, Norwich, of (here the writing is indiscernible owing to a tear in the MS.) Docking, and of South Creake.

At ten minutes to two on Thursday morning the noises commenced, and lasted, with very little pause, till two hours after daybreak. The

self-confident were crestfallen, and the fancied-wise acknowledged their ignorance as the sun rose high. Within the limits of any sheet of paper I could not give you even a sketch of what has taken place here. The smile of contented ignorance, or the sneer of presumption, cut but a poor figure when opposed to truth and fact—and the pharisaical cloak that is ostensibly worn to exclude "superstition" may secrete in its folds the very demon of "infidelity."

Arrangements are in progress to detect the most cunning schemes of human agency—but must be kept profoundly secret until the blow can be struck.

The magistrates, clergy, and surrounding gentry continue to arrive at the Parsonage, and offer us their public and private services in any way that can be at all considered useful. The Marquis of Cholmondeley's agent has gone to town resolved to lay the whole business before his lordship, and to suggest that a Bow Street officer should be sent down. I have likewise written to his lordship, who has been very kind to me.

You may rely upon it, that no human means (at whatever expense) shall be neglected to settle

the point as to human agency. To attain a right history of the Sydersterne noises you must read the details of (here the writing is illegible, owing to a blot), that took place in the family of the Wesleys in 1716, their Rectory being at Epworth, in Lincolnshire. The father's (the Rev. S. Wesley's) journal is transcribed by the great and good John Wesley, his son. These noises never could be accounted for.

I have already traced the existence of noises in Sydersterne Parsonage for thirty-six years back. I am told that Mr. Bullen, farmer, of Swaffham (with whom you are intimate), lived about that time at Creake (three miles from here), and recollects them occurring then. Be kind enough to ask him if he remembers of what nature they, at that period, were, and how long they continued without intermission. Favour me with the results of your enquiries. I think that but three of the generation then living now survive. The noises were here in 1797. Some ignoramus put the notices of them in the *East Anglian*. In that account some things are correct, mixed up with much that is wrong. However, I have kept a regular diary or journal of all things connected with them, and which in due time shall be published.

Get the solution of these questions from Mr. Bullen for me, and, lest we should be wanderers, when you purpose coming over to us, let us know by post the day you mean to visit here. On Saturday forenoon there will be a letter for James at Mr. Finch's, and which Claxton is to take.

Kind compliments from all to all under your "roof tree."

JOHN STEWART.

Commenting upon the hauntings, the Rev. H. Hacon, M.A., in a letter to me dated June 24, 1910, says:—

". . . Here you have whatever further particulars I am able to send about the haunted house. Some of them are among my earliest recollections.

"I can remember my father, when relating some of them, seeing my infant eyes expressing delicious terror, I suppose, turning the conclusion into something comic, so that I might not go to my bed in fear and trembling. When older I heard particulars from one of Mr. Stewart's sons.

"Sometimes the noises heard at the Parsonage were like the scratchings, not of a cat, but of

a tiger, on the inner walls of the house, whilst at other times they resembled a shower of copper coins promiscuously falling. One Sunday night, about the time Mr. Stewart came into residence, there were heard in the Parsonage noises like the shifting about of heavy furniture. So that one who heard the disturbances said, 'Well! I do wonder our new vicar should have his house set to rights on a Sunday!' There was not, however, a living soul in the house.

"The Stewart family were, of course, in a way, burdened by curious visitors. But being very hospitable, they were always glad to see their friends, two of whom, Swaffham contemporaries, Mr. and Mrs. Seppings, were passing the day and night there, anxious, of course, to witness some of the phenomena. As it was drawing near bedtime, Mr. Seppings, before saying good night, went to a side table to take up a bedroom candlestick, saying, 'Well! I don't suppose we shall hear anything to-night,' when, as his hand was about to grasp the candlestick, there came a stroke under the table and under the candlestick like that of a heavy hammer. Miss Stewart, the daughter of the house, after retiring to bed, would sometimes sing the Evening Hymn, when taps were heard

on the woodwork of the bed beating time to the music. Mr. Stewart, whose wife's health at last became enfeebled under the stress, concluded that the phenomena were evidences of the presence of a troubled spirit, for after every effort was made to ascertain the cause of the disturbances, nothing was discovered that in any way pointed to human agency.

" The Marquis of Cholmondeley, the Patron of the Living, had the ground round the house excavated to ascertain whether there was any vault underneath the house—none, however, was found. Two Bow Street officers were sent to exercise their skill. They passed the night, armed with loaded pistols, in chambers opposite to one another. In the night, each, hearing a noise as if in the opposite chamber, came out with a loaded pistol with the intention of firing. But a mutual recognition ensuing, the catastrophe of each being shot by the other was averted.

" The house, to the best of my belief, like a number of other old parsonages, was at length pulled down and a new one built in its stead. . . ."

In another letter my correspondent says:— " Mr. Stewart was a *quasi alumnus* of the great

Greek scholar, Dr. Parr, and was a man of eminent local literary celebrity. Mrs. Stewart, his wife, was a daughter of an Admiral McDougall, so there was neither in them, nor in any of their children, any peasant or bourgeois predilection to superstition about ghosts."

Upon my writing to the Rev. H. Hacon, M.A., and asking him if he had given me an exhaustive account of all the phenomena that were experienced in the Parsonage, he sent me the following list, which was a brief recapitulary of what he had already told me, with a few additions:—

(1) The sound as of a huge ball descending upon the roof and penetrating to the ground floor.

(2) A sound as of metal coin showering down from above.

(3) Scratching on the inner wall as of from the claws of a lion or tiger.

(4) On the occasion of a guest retiring for the night and putting his hand out for the night candlestick, a blow as from a hammer upon the under-side of the table where the candlestick was standing. The guest, by the way, had been expecting to hear the sounds, and was now concluding there would be none.

(5) The sound as of a hand on the woodwork of the bed, keeping time to the singing of the Evening Hymn by Mrs. Stewart's daughter, on the conclusion of the latter's daily devotions.

(6) The incident of the Bow Street officers.

(7) The incident of the shifting of the furniture.

(8) The screams as of a human being under torture.

Since after every precaution had been taken to guard against the possibility of trickery, the disturbances still continued, and were heard collectively, there can be little doubt they were superphysical. Such being the case, I am inclined to attribute them to the presence of an Elemental, though to what kind of Elemental it is impossible for me to say with any certainty, as the history of the Parsonage is unknown to me. Since, however, the disturbances do not seem to have been the precursors of any misfortune to the Stewarts, I can safely conclude that the Elemental was not a Clanogrian. It was, in all probability, either a Vice Elemental attracted thither by the past committal of some crime, or by the vicious thoughts of some former occupant, or a Vagrarian drawn to the spot by its seclusiveness, or by some relic of prehistoric

times. I think the latter is the most probable, for the grotesque nature of the sounds are quite in accordance with the appearance and behaviour of the generality of Vagrarians, who usually manifest their resentment of human trespassers, on what they presume to be their special preserves, by creating all manner of alarming disturbances.

Shortly before commencing this book, hearing rumours that a certain house in the neighbourhood of the Crystal Palace was haunted, I obtained permission from the owner to sleep there, the only condition being that I should on no account give any clue as to the real identity of the place, which he was most anxious to let; and it is a fact, however incredible it may seem to sceptics, that nothing more effectually prevents a house letting than the reputation that it is haunted!

The house in question, though furnished, had been standing empty for some long time, and when I entered it alone one evening about nine o'clock, I was at once impressed with the musty atmosphere. My first act, therefore, was to open the windows on the top landing. The house consisted of three storeys and a basement, twelve bed and four reception rooms, with the

usual kitchen offices. I had had no definite information as to the nature of the hauntings, so that I came to the house with a perfectly unbiassed mind, and under conditions that excluded any possibility of suggestion. I admit that, when the front door closed behind me, and I found myself in a silent, empty hall, in which the shadows of evening were fast beginning to assemble, my heart beat a little faster than usual. Confronting me was a staircase leading to all the grim possibilities of the upper landings, whilst a little on one side of it was a dark, narrow passage, from which a flight of unprepossessing stone steps led into the abyssmal depths of the basement.

After a few minutes' hesitation, glad even to hear my own footsteps, I moved across the hall, and after examining the rooms on the ground floor, ascended to those above.

All the blinds in the house being down, each room with its ponderous old-fashioned furniture presented a particularly funereal aspect, to which a startling effect was given by a few patches of brilliant moonlight, that, falling on the polished surfaces of the wardrobes, converted them into mirrors, wherein I saw the reflections of what apparently had no material counterparts.

Here and there, too, in some remote angle, I saw a white and glistening something, that for a moment chilled my blood, until a closer inspection proved it to be a mere illumination on the wall or on some naturally bright object.

I have generally been able to detect, both in Silence and in Shadows, an indefinable Something that is—to me, at any rate—an almost sure indication of the near proximity of the Superphysical; and the moment I crossed the threshold of this house, I felt this indefinable Something all round me in a degree that was most marked.

The hush, indeed, which was forced and unnatural, had grown with each step I took, until now, as I involuntarily paused to listen, the pulsation of my own heart was like the rapid beating on a drum, whilst I instinctively felt that numerous other beings were holding in their breath simultaneously with mine. The shadows, too, were far from normal shadows, for as I glanced behind me, and saw them waving to and fro on the walls and floor, I was not only struck with the fact that several of them resembled nothing near at hand, nothing that could in any way be explained by the furniture,

but that, wherever I went, the same few shadows glided surreptitiously behind me.

As I was about to enter one of the top attics, there was a thud, and something flew past me. I switched on my flashlight. It was a black cat—a poor stray creature with gaunt sides and unkempt coat—a great deal more frightened than I.

My investigation of the upper premises over, I descended into the basement, which, like all basements that have remained disused for any length of time, was excessively cold and damp.

There were two cellars, the one opening into the other, both pitch dark and streaming with moisture, and as I groped my way down into them by the spasmodic aid of my pocket search-light, I could not help thinking of the recent gruesome discoveries in Hilldrop Crescent.

In nine cases out of ten the origin of hauntings may be looked for in basements, the gloomy, depressing nature of which seem to have a special attraction for those Elementals that suggest crime.

And here, in the cellars, far removed from prying eyes and sunlight, here, under the clammy, broken cement floor, here was an ideal sepulchre ready for the use of any murderer.

He had only to poke his nose half-way down the steps to be struck with the excellence of the idea, and to hurry back for pick and shovel to make the job complete.

The longer I lingered in the cellars, the more firmly I became convinced that they had at one time or another witnessed some secret burial. Dare I remain down there and wait for the phenomena? The heavy, fœtid atmosphere of the place hung round me like a wet rag, while the chill fumes, rising from between the crevices in the cement, ascended my nostrils and made me sneeze. If I stayed in this charnel house, I must certainly risk rheumatic fever. Then a brilliant thought struck me—I would cover the floor of the innermost cellar with cocoanut matting; there were several loose stacks of it lying in the scullery.

I did so, and the result, though not, perhaps, quite as satisfactory as I had anticipated, for the dampness was still abominable, made it at least possible for me to remain there. I accordingly perched myself on a table I had also brought from the scullery, and waited.

Minute after minute passed and nothing happened, nothing beyond a few isolated noises, such as the slamming of some far-distant door—

which slamming, as I tried to reassure myself, momentarily forgetting that the house I was in was detached, might be in the next house—and the creaking of boards, those creakings that one so seldom seems to hear in the day time, but which one laughingly tells oneself are due to natural causes—though what those causes are is apparently inexplicable.

The wind does not blow every night, neither can it perform half of that for which it is often held responsible, neither does every house swarm with rats. Still, I do not say that what I then heard could not have been accounted for naturally—I daresay it might have been—only I was not clever enough to do it. Sceptics are usually so brilliant that one often wonders how it is they do not occupy all the foremost places in literature, science, and art—why, in fact, the smart, shrewd man, who scoffs at ghosts, is so often unheard of, whilst the poor silly believer in the superphysical is so often eminent as a scientist or author. Can it be that it is, after all, the little learning that makes the man the fool?

But to continue. The hour of midnight—that hour erroneously supposed to be the one when psychic phenomena usually show themselves—passed, and I anxiously awaited for

what I felt every moment might now produce.

About one o'clock the temperature in the cellars suddenly grew so cold that my teeth chattered, and I then heard, as I thought, in the front hall, a tremendous crash as if all the crockery in the house had been dashed from some prodigious height in one big pile on the floor. Then there was a death-like hush, and then a jabber, jabber, jabber—apparently in the kitchen overhead—as of someone talking very fast, and very incoherently, to themselves; then silence, and then, what made me feel sick with terror, the sound of shuffling footsteps slowly approaching the head of the steps confronting me. Nearer and nearer they came, until they suddenly paused, and I saw the blurred outlines of the luminous figure of something stunted, something hardly human, and something inconceivably nasty.

It rushed noiselessly down the steps, and, brushing swiftly past me, vanished in the furthest corner of the cellar.

Feeling that nothing more would happen now, I ascended the steps, and after a final and brief survey of the premises, walked home, feeling convinced that the phenomena I had experienced were due to a Vice Elemental

attracted to the house by a murder that had once been committed there, the body of the victim being interred in one of the cellars.

I was not able to visit the house again, and the owner, though acknowledging that what I had seen and heard was a recognised feature of the hauntings, refused to disclose anything further.

PART IV.

CHAPTER VI.

SUGGESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES.

In accordance with a general opinion, which is unquestionably correct, it would be extremely ridiculous to dogmatise on a subject so open to controversy as Psychic Phenomena, hence my statements must not be regarded in any sense as arbitrary; they are merely views based on a certain amount of actual experience.

PHANTASMS.

A phantasm, in my opinion, is a phenomena that cannot be explained by any physical laws. It is an objective—something, that can materialise and dematerialise at will, that can sometimes emit sounds, sometimes move material objects, and sometimes (though rarely) commit acts of physical violence on material objects. It can produce various sensations on living material bodies, whilst it is, in itself, though sometimes sensible and rational, as far as we know, always

insensible to physical action. It can adopt a variety of different forms, and, being subject to no limitations of space and time, it can pass through opaque objects in any place and at any time.

CLASSIFICATION OF PHANTASMS.

Without any attempt at an exhaustive classification (which is, of course, impossible), I have divided the different kinds of phantasms that have come within my experience as follows:—Phantasms of the Dead, Phantasms of the Living, and Elementals, and since I have defined each of these species in another of my works, it will be sufficient for me to say here, that by Phantasms of the Dead, I mean the phantasms of every form of life that has inhabited a material body, whether human, animal, or vegetable, for I maintain that there is a spirit in everything that lives; that by Phantasms of the Living, I mean the superphysical counterpart of a living material body that can, under certain conditions not at present fully known, leave that body and manifest itself at any distance away from that body, either visually or auditorially; and that by Elementals, I mean all spirits that have never inhabited any material body.

PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD.

As I have already stated, I think earth-bound spirits of the dead are confined to people whose animal propensities were far in excess of their spiritual—that is to say, whose thoughts were entirely centred on matters appertaining to the material world.

I do not suppose for one moment all such spirits would be compelled to haunt certain localities, but only the spirits of murderers, of carnal-minded suicides, of misers and other people who, when alive, were attracted to one spot by some special vice or peculiar hobby; the spirits of criminal lunatics, and vicious imbeciles, and of particularly gross and sensual people, whose phantasms are, according to some authorities (a view I do not altogether take), as bestial and savage in appearance as the people, when alive, were lustful and cruel in disposition, need not necessarily haunt one spot. That the earth-bound spirits of murderers, suicides, and grossly sensual people haunt certain localities in the shape of certain animals has been firmly believed for many centuries. According to Hartshorne, a man, who committed suicide at Broomfield, near Salisbury, came back to earth

in the form of a black dog; whilst legend says that the spirit of Lady Howard, of James the First's reign, who got rid of four husbands, haunts the road from Fitzford to Oakhampton Park, in the shape of a hound.

Many spectral dogs, supposed by some to be the souls of evil-doers, are alleged to haunt the sides of pools and rivers, particularly in Devon. Mr. Dyer, in his *Ghost World* (p. 107) gives an instance of a haunting near Tring, where the spirit of a chimney-sweep, who murdered an old woman, was frequently seen on the site of the gibbet, on which he was hanged, in the form of a black dog. As, however, the phantasms of so many murderers and vicious people have been seen in forms more or less resembling those people when alive, I am inclined to attribute the apparitions of animals either to the earth-bound spirits of the animals themselves, or to Impersonating and Vice Elementals, whilst to the latter I attribute the entire sub-human and sub-animal type of psychic phenomenon—such, for example, as the pig-headed ghost of Guilsborough.

THE SOULS OF THE GOOD.

Whilst the spirits of bad people are thus held

to be reincarnate, in the shape of animals, in some countries there is a belief that the souls of the good remain on earth for an indefinite period in the guise of birds. In Bulgaria, for example, all souls are supposed to leave the body in the form of birds—a belief that was at one time prevalent among certain North American Indian tribes, whilst in Denmark and Germany there was at one time an almost universal belief that the advent of infants was heralded by the appearance of a stork, who brought the child's soul with it (vide *Thorpe's Northern Mythology*, i., p. 289). To my mind, it is a significant fact that from time immemorial psychism has been closely associated with the bird which, in Egyptian hieroglyphics and other symbols of the Ancients, signifies the soul.

Apropos of psychism and birds, a very curious incident happened this spring to a relative of mine with whom I was staying in the village of G——. Early one morning a large bird came to his bedroom window, and by violent tappings and flappings of its wings against the glass, attracted his attention, when it at once flew away. The previous day an old and dear friend of his (to whom he was very

much attached) had died, and he subsequently learned that on the day of her funeral a dove had come to the window of the room in which the dead body lay, and had behaved in precisely the same manner, flying away directly it had succeeded in attracting attention. The visitation of these birds may, of course, only have been a coincidence, but if so, it was a very curious one—indeed, I am inclined to believe that in each instance the bird was a benevolent Elemental that appeared with the sole object of intimating to my relative and to those around the dead body of his friend that the soul of the latter was still alive.

Though I think it quite possible that the souls of the virtuous and spiritual-minded remain earth-bound for a short space after death, I do not think that, when once they are removed to other spheres, they can, under any circumstances, return. There can be no going back when once they have begun the slow, but sure, process of spiritual evolution which will lead them to Paradise.

FUTURITY FOR DUMB ANIMALS.

There is, in my opinion, abundant evidence to show that dogs, horses, and birds have spirits

that survive death, and this being so, it is only reasonable to suppose that there is a future existence for every kind of animal and for everything, in fact, that possesses any sort of mind—though I do not believe that their spirits all go to the same sphere. A relative of mine, once a year, always hears the sound of barking over the grave of a very favourite fox-terrier, whilst another relative has on more than one occasion seen the phantasm of a black spaniel to which she was very much attached. Mr. Harper, in his book of *Haunted Houses* (Chapman and Hall, 1907), gives a very interesting account of the alleged haunting of Ballechin House, Perthshire, by the phantasms of a number of dogs that had been shot on the death—and at the express desire—of a Major Stewart, the late owner of the property; whilst a lady correspondent of mine tells me that her eldest nephew has, from the time he was three years old, seen, occasionally, two thin dogs like greyhounds. To quote her own words: "They seem to come and look at him, he says. He is a most matter-of-fact person, and I do not think he has any belief in psychic matters at all. He was born in the North West Territory, where there are no dogs of that kind, and did

not come to England until he was over four years old."

In my book, *The Haunted Houses of London*, I gave several instances of the apparitions of animals, including that of a dear old dog of mine that appeared to me in York Road, London, and of a parrot that was seen standing on the shoulders of a lady near Clifton.

Although it is only too apparent that animals have not man's capacity for appreciating what is morally beautiful—in other words, have no souls—I think their intelligence, sagacity, and faithfulness ensures a future life of happiness to them with as great a certainty as "soul" entails a happy futurity to us. Consequently, I believe that all animals and insects have future lives, and that the spirits of all animals and insects, like the souls of men, are being continually contended for by Elementals; and that whilst the spirits of the faithful, benignant, gentle, and industrious go to the Animals' Paradise, the spirits of the cruel and savage are condemned to go to a corresponding Hades.

There is apparently, however, no very stringent law to prevent the spirits of all kinds of animals—benevolent and otherwise—from occasionally returning and materialising to us.

PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING.

I have already stated that it is quite possible to separate the superphysical from the physical body, and for the former to manifest itself either visually or auditorially, or both, at any distance from the latter. The accomplishment of this act—which is called projection—is entirely a question of concentration, but of a concentration so intense that it cannot be reached—at least, such is my experience—without absolute physical quiet and total absence of mental disturbance.

The separation of the two bodies may be done consciously or unconsciously, more often the latter, and not infrequently, too, during sleep. Indeed, many cases of nocturnal hauntings have been found to be due to the phantasms of living people, who have dreamed they were visiting certain localities, and whose superphysical bodies frequently have, in very truth, visited the places in question, and thereby occasioned the hauntings.

The following is one of the many stories I have heard that would serve as an example of this kind of haunting. A Mrs. Elmore, on the occasion of her first visit to Scotland, told me

that the people with whom she was staying took her to see a picturesque house near Montrose. The caretaker, on opening the door to them, turned deadly pale, and screamed out, "God help us! If it isn't the ghost come to visit me in broad daylight!" When the woman had recovered a little from her fright, she explained to them that, for some months past, the house had been haunted by an apparition the exact image of Mrs. Elmore; it had exactly the same face and figure, but was wearing different clothes, which clothes, however, when the caretaker described them, Mrs. Elmore immediately identified with certain garments she had at home.

As they proceeded to explore the house, it began to dawn on Mrs. Elmore that the face of the old woman was strangely familiar, and, on ascending the main staircase, she at once recognised the landing and passages as those she had been continually dreaming about during the past year. Pointing to one of the closed doors, she exclaimed, "That is my favourite room with the pretty blue wall paper, the blue carpet and the quaint inlaid cabinet standing opposite the foot of the old oak bedstead."

The caretaker again almost fainted in astonish-

ment. "It is just as you describe, ma'am," she exclaimed. "The De'il is in it."

And it did indeed seem like it, as Mrs. Elmore knew the upper part of the house—the part she had visited in her sleep—by heart. As a matter of fact, there is no doubt that during sleep Mrs. Elmore's superphysical body had left her material body and visited the house. In all such cases, however, as well as in cases of conscious projection, there is great danger, since, awake or asleep, we are never free from antagonistic Elementals, who would have no difficulty in seizing both our superphysical and material bodies, and appropriating the latter to their own use, were it not for the combatting and counteracting efforts of our guardian angels—the Benevolent Elementals.

All dreams, whether accompanied or unaccompanied by unconscious projections, are induced by Elementals.

THE CLOTHES OF PHANTASMS.

Again, and again, sceptics, with would-be smartness, have said to me, "Where do ghosts get their clothes? One can imagine the spirit of a person, but not the spirit of his garments. There are surely no tailoring establishments in

the psychic world?" But this argument, if such it can be called, is of little value, since the Dead who appear would naturally assume those forms in which they were best known when living, and when on earth they were surely better known clothed than unclothed.

The clothes are not, of course, material clothes any more than the body is a material body—they are mere accessories assumed, so to speak, to make the image more complete, and to facilitate the question of identity. It is surely not difficult to understand that the Force which has the power to manifest itself at all, has the power to manifest itself in the most suitable guise. The phantasm is, after all, only the image of the spirit or soul; it is not actually the spirit or soul itself, any more than the man we see walking about Regent Street in a silk hat and frock-coat is actually the man himself; the latter is an abstract quantity, compounded of spirit, soul, and intelligence—what we see is merely an outward concrete form, whereby we are able to identify that abstract quantity. So it is with the superphysical ego. To identify it we must either see or feel it, and thus to those of us who have sight, it appears in a form with which some of us, at least, are familiar—the

form that was once common to its material body; hence clothes—illusionary clothes—are necessary appendages.

It is not so with certain orders of Elementals: having no identity to prove, they manifest themselves—nude.

PHANTASMS OF THE MURDERED AND OF SUICIDES.

As I have already stated, where suicides and murdered people have led gross lives, the hauntings are undoubtedly due to their earth-bound spirits; but where they have been benevolent and pure-minded people, then the phenomena experienced after their deaths may be attributed to Elementals.

ELEMENTALS.

Elementals—namely, those spirits that have never had material bodies, human or animal—are either benevolent, antagonistic, or neutral, and are subjected to the supervision of those Higher Occult Forces that are responsible for the creation of Nature. I do not think it feasible that the same Powers (or Power) that created all that is beneficial to man, created also

all that is obnoxious to him. If Man were the only sufferer, then one could attach some credence to the story of the Fall, though there would be little enough justice in it then; but when one considers the vast amount of suffering that has always been endured by all forms of animal life, the Biblical version of the Garden of Eden degenerates into a mere myth as unjust as it is fanciful. Whatever man may have done to have brought upon himself thousands of years of the most hideous sufferings, it is ludicrous to suppose that animals and insects also sinned! And therefore, since to me the terms Almighty and Merciful, and Almighty and Just, are utterly irreconcilable when applied to the Creator of this material world, I can only assume that there was not one Creative Force, but many, and that whilst some (probably the majority) of these Forces (none of which are supreme, for if one were Omnipotent, then the others would assuredly cease to exist) have always been diametrically opposed to one another in their attitude towards all forms of animal life, others have remained indifferent and neutral. Of these Creative Forces, some, whom I will designate the Benevolent Powers, wished both man and beast to live for ever in perfect happi-

ness, whilst others, whom I will designate the Evil Powers, wished both man and beast to die. Some sort of a compromise was therefore arranged by which the contending Forces agreed that all forms of animal life should die, and that the material body should be succeeded by the superphysical, for the possession of which both Forces must contend. The Benevolent Powers would strive to transfer superphysical man, after subjecting him to the thorough process of spiritual evolution to their own particular sphere, namely, Paradise, whilst the Evil Powers would strive to keep superphysical man permanently bound to this Earth, namely, Purgatory; hence there would be a constant struggle between them, a struggle in which each opposing Force would resort to every conceivable device to secure the souls and spirits of both man and beast.

To the Benevolent Creative Powers, then, we owe everything that tends to man's happiness (and what is more necessary to real happiness than temperance and morality), whilst to the Evil Creative Powers are due all diseases, crimes, and cruelties—everything, in fact, that is injurious to health and responsible for suffering, either mental or physical.

I think I have elsewhere stated in my defini-

tion of Benevolent Elementals that they would seem to be identical with the good fairies of our childhood's days, and with the angels in the Bible. In any case they are employed by the Higher Occult Powers friendly to man, and are always with us, trying to keep us in the paths of virtue, and guarding us from physical danger.

Vice Elementals, on the other hand, are employed by the Higher Occult Powers inimical to man, and are also always with us, trying to persuade us to do everything that harms us mentally, morally, and physically, and that, in a like manner, indirectly injures our neighbours.

Vice Elementals appear in every variety of form, from beautiful, captivating women and handsome, insinuating men, to the grossest and most terrifying caricatures of both man and beast; for example, pig-headed men, monstrous dogs (such as "The Mauthe Dog" of Peel Castle, Isle of Man; the Kirk-grim of Scandinavia, which is sometimes a dog and sometimes a horse or pig); the Gwyllgi of Wales; huge bears (such as the famous "bear" ghost of the Tower of London), and many other mal-shaped forms of man and beast.

Whereas, however, the more prepossessing type of this class of Elemental roams everywhere, the more terrible are usually confined to places where crimes have been committed and impure thoughts conceived.

VAGRARIANS.

These Elementals, which I have already described, are merely survivals of experiments at life, prior to the selection of any definite forms of man and beast; they were created by the neutral Powers, and their attitude to man (whom they shun as much as possible), though spiteful and mischievous, is prompted by nothing actually sinister.

MORBAS, OR DISEASE ELEMENTALS.

These Phantasms are the Agents of the Evil Creative Powers. Always hideous in appearance, they create all manner of malignant bacilli, and are responsible for all diseases and illness, which they often delight in predicting.

CLANOGRIANS, OR FAMILY GHOSTS.

Why there should be a particular type of Elemental attached to certain families it is difficult to say. Some people think it is solely on account of the dreadful crimes perpetrated

by members of these families in past days; but if that were the case, what family would be exempt, since there can be very few amongst us who could positively assert that no ancestor of his had ever committed a murder! I think it more likely, that, at one time, Man was in much closer touch with the Creative Powers than he is now, and that certain families, as a mark of friendship, or otherwise, had Clanogrians attached to them (by both the Benevolent and Antagonistic Powers), with the express purpose of warning them of physical danger, and that in course of time, as the relationship between the Higher Powers and man grew more distant, the functions of these Family Elementals became fewer and fewer, until at length they consisted solely of Death warnings, as is now the case.

It would seem that certain houses, such, for example, as Knebworth and the one in which Mrs. Wright (whose case I have already mentioned) lived, as well as families, have ghosts attached to them that have the power of warning people of their approaching doom.

It is, of course, quite possible that these ghosts were once attached to people, either living in those houses, or in some way connected with them, and, that leaving those people, they took

up their freed abode in the houses, continuing, however, their function of Death Warning. On the other hand, they may be a type of Vagrarian who, being brought to the house with some antique piece of furniture, resolve to take up their abode in it. As this type of Elemental prefers solitude, it would naturally take every means in its power to insure it. Or, again, they may be a type of Elemental closely allied to Morbas, who are attracted to these houses by crimes once committed there (for I think when once a murder has been committed no Benevolent Powers can prevent Vice and other antagonistic Elementals from taking up their abode on the spot), and who have the power committed to them to bring about all manner of catastrophes fatal to the material inmates of the house; hence houses where death warnings of the nature of phantom clocks have been heard should be studiously avoided.

IMPERSONATING ELEMENTALS.

One of the functions of Impersonating Elementals, as I have already stated, is to perform the *rôles* both of the victim of murder and of suicide, though only in those cases where the spirits of the murdered person and the

suicide are not themselves earth-bound. These Elementals would seem to be Neutrals, or spirit properties, employed alike by the Benevolent and Antagonistic Forces. In cases of suicide, for example, they would be employed by the Benevolent Forces with the object of warning people against self-destruction; and, at the same time, they might be employed by the Antagonistic Forces with the object of leading people on to self-destruction.

I think Impersonating Elementals sometimes manifest themselves at Spiritualistic *séances*, when they appear as relatives and friends of the sitters, and are pronounced to be such by the "controls."

In dreams, too, Impersonating Elementals frequently find constant employment, assuming every variety of guise—indeed, dreams, as I have already remarked, are completely under the control of Benevolent, Impersonating, and Antagonistic Elementals.

NEUTRAL ELEMENTALS.

Under this heading are included all Impersonating Elementals, some Clanogrians, and the greater number of Vagrarians, Pixies, and Fire Elementals.

MATERIALISATION.

All superphysical spirits, whether earth-bound spirits of the dead or Elementals, have the power of materialisation, though the conditions under which they may do so vary considerably. What the conditions actually are, is quite unknown at present to physical man.

THE PSYCHIC FACULTY.

I think the seeing, hearing, or feeling of psychic phenomena is determined by the Phenomena themselves, and that the latter themselves select the person to whom they wish to become manifest—hence there is no actual psychic faculty. I have, for example, in a haunted house, seen the phenomenon on one night and not on another, though on both occasions other people in the room have witnessed it. There are no end of other instances, too, in which people, who see apparitions on one occasion, do not see them on another, although the manifestations are of a precisely similar nature.

PHANTOM COACHES, CLOCKS, SHIPS, ETC.

Phantom coaches, clocks, ships, etc., are merely illusionary accessories to help carry out

the design of Elementals. A coach was said at one time to haunt a road in Monmouthshire, and there are numerous cases of similar hauntings in different parts of England.

From time to time, too, phantom ships are reputed to have been seen off the North Cornish coast, whilst there is hardly a coast in the world that has not been visited by them. As they are usually seen before maritime catastrophes, they undoubtedly belong to the order of Clanograins, with which I accordingly classify them.

PHANTASMS IN MINES.

In certain mining districts, after work hours, the miners say they hear the sounds of knocking and picking proceeding from the levels they have just vacated, and they declare it is "The Buccas" at work, the Buccas being a species of Neutral Elemental (closely allied to the Pixie) peculiar to mines. I have never heard of any of the miners seeing the Buccas, though several have spoken to me of the noises they have heard.

Deserted old mines are often alleged to be haunted, and I have been told that if one stands by the mouth of an empty shaft on a still night, one can hear the rolling of the Buccas' barrows and the thud, thud, of the Buccas' picks.

Interesting accounts of similar phenomena are given in Carne's *Tales of the West* and Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England.*

Another species of ghost, allied, perhaps, to the Clanogrian, is a blue, luminous hand that appears in various parts of the mine before a catastrophe; sometimes it is seen climbing ropes, sometimes resting on the edge of one of the cages, and sometimes hovering in mid-air with a finger pointed at the doomed men.

Certain mines in France are haunted by a white hare that appears with the same purport, whilst in Germany the miners are haunted by Elementals of the Pixie order, called respectively Kobolds and Knauffbriegen, that play all sorts of mischievous pranks (very often of a dangerous nature) on the miners. Mines are, in addition, of course, subjected to all the ordinary forms of hauntings.

PHANTASMS OF THE SEA.

In all parts of the world there is a firm belief among many of the people living in lonely spots on the coast, that the sea and rocks are haunted by the earth-bound spirits of the drowned, and often when I have been walking alone at night along the cliffs or sandy beaches between Bude

and Clovelly, and Lamorna and the Land's End, Dalkey and Bray and Lunan Bay, I have heard the rising and falling of ghostly voices from over the deserted, star-lit sea—voices that may either have come from the superphysical bodies of those who lay engulfed there, or from Impersonating Elementals.

I have repeatedly heard it said that in the grey hours of the morning all sorts of queer filmy shapes rise out of the sea and glide over the silent strand.

Mr. Dyer, in his *Ghost World*, refers to "The Bay of the Departed" in Brittany, where boatmen are summoned by some unseen power to launch their boats and to ferry to some island near at hand the souls of the men who have been drowned. In this bay, too, the wails and cries of the phantasms of shipwrecked sailors are clearly heard in the dead of night. So strong is the antipathy of the seafaring community in many parts of Brittany to the sea coast that none will approach it after nightfall.

Mr. Hunt, in his *Romances of West of England*, says that one night when a fisherman was walking along the sands at Porth-Towan, he suddenly heard a voice cry out three times

from the sea, "The hour is come, but not the man," whereupon a black figure, like that of a man, appeared on the top of the hill, paused for a moment, and then, rushing impetuously down the steep incline, over the sand, vanished amid the gently lapping waves.

The figure, of course, may have been the actual earth-bound spirit of someone who was once drowned in that spot, or it may have been an impersonating or Vice Elemental attracted to that spot by some tragedy that had taken place there; since I have heard of many similar instances of tall, thin figures bounding over cliffs or across sandy beaches, vanishing in the sea, I conclude such phenomena are by no means uncommon.

In certain parts of the Norfolk coast it is still, I believe, affirmed that before any person is drowned a voice is heard from the sea predicting a squall, and a great reluctance is still shown in many countries to rescue anyone from drowning, since it is popularly supposed that the drowning person will at some time or another injure his rescuer—an idea which should certainly be discouraged, whether there is any truth in it or not. But the sea certainly has a peculiar fascination for most people, and, I feel sure, it

possesses a species of Elemental peculiar to itself. Those Elementals probably resent the rescue of their would-be victims, and use the latter as a means of wreaking their vengeance on the rescuer!

HAUNTED TREES.

Cases of trees haunted by particularly grotesque kinds of phantasms (presumably Vagrarians, Vice Elementals, and Neutrals) are numerous.

A few years ago, a Mrs. Cayley told me that when riding along a certain road in India, she had the greatest difficulty in making her horse pass a particular tree, and that on mentioning the matter to a native servant, the man at once exclaimed, "Allah preserve you, mem-sahib, from ever passing near that tree. A dog-faced man sits at the base of the trunk, and, with his long arms outstretched, watches for passers-by. He springs upon them, half frightens them to death, and overwhelms them with misfortune. If ever you come within the clutches of the dog-faced spirit, mem-sahib, you will shortly afterwards meet with some dire calamity. The horse has second sight, mem-sahib; it can see the spirit.

and its evil nature, and has no desire to place either itself or you within its cluthces. Be wise, mem-sahib, and never go near that tree! "

Mrs. Cayley, however, was not wise. Laughing at the Indian's credulity, she immediately saddled her horse, and riding to the tree, compelled the reluctant and terrified animal to pass under its branches. Just as it did so, Mrs. Caley felt an icy current of air pass right through her, and, glancing down, saw, to her horror, a misty something crouching against the trunk of the tree and peering up at her. She couldn't tell what it was, its shape being altogether too distinct, but from the fact that it impressed her with sensations of the utmost terror and loathing, she realised that it was something both diabolical and malignant. At this moment her horse shied, and she knew nothing more till she found herself with a sprained ankle, lying on the ground close to the tree. Her terror was then so great that, without daring to look round, she rolled over and over till she had got from under cover of the branches, when, despite the pain caused by her injury, she got up and hobbled home.

That evening a very near relative of hers was accidentally shot, and within the week her

favourite brother died from the effects of sunstroke!

The ghost in this case was either a Vice Elemental attracted to the tree by some tragedy once enacted there, or a phantasm of the malignant order of Clanogrian.

Hauntings of a similar nature are not uncommon in Ireland.

According to certain North American Indian tribes, trees have spirits of their own, which resemble beautiful women, whilst in Greece certain trees are haunted by "Stichios" (see *Superstitions of Modern Greece*, by M. Le Baron d'Estournelles), a malignant kind of Vagrarian or Clanogrian that wreaks vengeance on anyone or anything venturing to sleep beneath the branches.

In Australia, too, the Bushmen often shun trees, declaring them to be haunted by demons that whistle in the branches. Whether this is true or not, many trees are haunted, and the phantasm that most commonly haunts them is undoubtedly the sub-human and sub-animal type of Vice Elemental—such as was seen by Mrs. Cayley on the day her relative was accidentally shot and shortly before her brother succumbed to sunstroke.

TELEPATHY.

The transference of thought from one mind to another without any other medium than air is an established fact—such communications are of daily occurrence. At present, however, the communications usually take place without any conscious endeavour on the part of the transmitter, or knowledge of actual reception on the part of the receiver.

For example, a certain Mr. Philpotts, with whom I am acquainted, when on a visit to London, was wishing very earnestly one morning that his wife, whom he had left at home, would go into his study and write a letter in reply to one which he had forgotten to answer. On his return home next day, he found to his astonishment that at the very time he had been thinking of the letter, his wife had actually gone into the study and penned it. Up to that moment, she had had no intention of going into the study, and no idea that any letter there needed an answer.

Instances like this are numerous. The questions now arise as to whether it is possible for the transmitter of the thoughts to raise in the recipient's mind visions which might be thought

to be objective, and that if such a process should be possible, if it would not account for many of the so-called superphysical phenomena?

In instances where phenomena are seen individually, *i.e.*, where they manifest themselves to single individuals, I think it possible, but not probable, that they may be due to telepathy; but where the demonstrations take place, either visually or auditorially, before a number of people, several of whom are conscious of them, then those demonstrations are without doubt objective, and consequently in no way traceable to telepathic communication. This being so, why, then, should not all such demonstrations, whether manifesting themselves individually or collectively, be objective?

In the case of Miss D., a case I have already mentioned in reference to projection, the phenomenon was without a doubt objective. Four of us suddenly saw what we all took to be the natural body of Miss D. descend the staircase, pass between us, open a door and slam it behind her, the fact of her disappearance—there being no exit from the room she had entered and into which we had immediately followed her—proving beyond question that what we had seen was her superphysical body. She was actually a long

distance from the house at the time of the occurrence, and could not remember thinking either of us or the house, so that the separation of her superphysical from her physical body must have taken place unconsciously. I had a decided impression of her dress as it swept over my feet during her descent of the staircase. We were all busily engaged in discussing our programme for the day when the phantasm appeared, and had, certainly, not been thinking of Miss D.

I do not think, then, that Phantasms of the Living are in any way attributable to telepathy, but that, like all other phantasms, they are purely superphysical. I have often been to haunted houses where the nature of the haunting was entirely unknown to me, and witnessed the same phenomena that I have subsequently learned have been experienced by countless other people. This has happened to me individually and collectively; collectively when my companions have been in as complete ignorance as to the nature of the manifestations as myself. Indeed, in most of my investigations I am accompanied by pronounced sceptics, who are, in addition, complete strangers to the neighbourhood. Hence there can be no question,

under these circumstances, either of telepathy or suggestion.

SPIRITUALISTIC *SÉANCES.*

As I have already inferred, I think it quite likely that genuine superphysical manifestations do, at times, take place at spiritualistic *séances*, but I am convinced that all such phenomena are confined to earth-bound spirits of the Dead, and Impersonating and Vice Elementals. For this reason I think constant, or even casual, attendance at *séances* is a very dangerous thing, as, not content with appearing at the *séance*, these undesirable Elementals will attach themselves to the sitters, accompanying them home and wherever they may go, with the sole object of doing them mischief; and when once attached, they will not easily, if ever, be got rid of.

I am often asked if I know of a materialising medium who is above the suspicion of trickery. I do not. There is no medium that I have ever met, or even heard of, that has not at times (at all events) resorted to fraudulent means of producing phenomena.

If spirits can manifest themselves in haunted houses without the assistance of a medium, or the necessity of sitting round tables with joined

hands, or facing "curtained off" recesses or mysterious cabinets—why cannot they thus simply manifest themselves at a *séance?* To my mind the reason is obvious, since the genuine superphysical manifestations cannot be summoned at will by any medium, the latter, rather than allow his audience to go away unsatisfied, invariably makes use of conditions, under cover of which—failing the genuine phenomenon—he can always produce a fraudulent representation.

The stock-in-trade of many spiritualistic *séances* seems to be an Indian, who executes a wild dance and speaks in a Hill dialect only known to one or two people in the room (confederates, of course), a beautiful girl who was once a very naughty nun, or hospital nurse, and several soldiers stated to have been killed in recent wars and who are anxious to materialise. This, however, they do not do, as one or two ladies in the audience (confederates again) declare they dare not under any circumstances behold bullet wounds and sabre cuts—a protest that at once meets with the approval of the "control," who bids the soldiers remain invisible, and talk only. The sound of voices is then heard proceeding from behind a heavy curtain that is

hung across the recess of a window conveniently left open. Sometimes, a number of feet are seen moving backwards and forwards under the curtain, and, occasionally, a very ugly but unmistakeably material head (wearing a mask) is poked through between the drawn curtains, much, of course, to the horror of the more timid of the audience, who are only too ready to believe the declaration of the medium and his confederates, that the head is that of some Earth-bound Spirit.

The darkness of the room—for *séances* are seldom held in the light—facilitates every manner of trickery, whilst the window, cabinet, and door all furnish easy means of entrance and exit.

The knockings on the table and the banging of tambourines are, as I have proved over and over again, invariably the work either of the medium himself or of confederates amongst the audience.

The trumpets that blow on the walls are generally manipulated by someone outside the room, and the sound that apparently comes from them, often, in reality, proceeds from an entirely different quarter.

I think, however, that genuine spirits do

occasionally materialise, but that when they do, it is as much to the terror of the medium as of his audience. The fear inspired by a *bona-fide* superphysical demonstration is a very different thing to that produced by a bogus one —the sensations are absolutely unlike, and anyone who has once beheld a spontaneous psychic materialisation in a genuinely haunted house cannot be deceived by the doll-like make-beliefs at spiritualistic *séances*.

AUTOMATIC WRITING.

Though I have never been able to obtain any very definite results myself with planchette, I have no doubt genuine spirit messages are obtained in this way, and that such messages are always suggested by Elementals. But since these messages cannot be relied upon, owing to the fact that it is impossible to tell by what order of Elementals they are suggested, I think automatic writing is sheer waste of time.

THE LAYING OF PHANTASMS.

Last year, when I was investigating at a notorious haunted house in the West of England, the ghost suddenly and quite unexpectedly appeared in our midst. There were several of

us present, and we were all much alarmed, as I believe one always is in the presence of the Unknown. I addressed the phenomenon, challenging it in the name of God and adjuring it to speak; there was, however, no response of any kind, and I think it extremely doubtful if it understood what I said, or even if it heard me.

I have done this on other occasions, and always with the same result—the phenomenon has remained totally unaffected by my words.

I know also of a case in which a Roman Catholic priest tried to lay a spirit, with the startling result that the spirit (figuratively speaking) laid him, for on his mumbling out some form of exorcism, it stretched out a grotesque and shadowy hand, and he fell face downwards on his bed, unable to utter a sound or move a muscle.

I have, however, heard instances in which phantasms have been "laid" by the repetition of prayers, and so can only conclude that the possibility of laying a ghost depends entirely on conditions about which we know nothing.

Whereas I think it highly probable that oral communication may sometimes be held with rational Phantasms of the Dead with possible

beneficial results on one or both sides, no mode of address produces other than an irritating effect on Phantasms of the Insane; there is no consistency whatever in the result of exhortation on Elementals.

PHANTASMS OF THE INSANE.

Whether the spirit of an insane person is earth-bound, or not, depends entirely on the cause of the malady. If the insanity is due to long indulgence in vice, or if it is hereditary, then I think the spirit of the mad person is earth-bound; but if the disease is the result of a shock or of something not brought about by vicious indulgences, and the sufferer had been perfectly pure-minded before the affliction, then his spirit is certainly not earth-bound. The former species of insanity would be the work of Vice Elementals and Morbas, and the latter of Morbas only.

The ghosts of idiots are, in my opinion, always earth-bound, and few forms of hauntings are more horrible than those in which the manifestations are due to Imbeciles—a by no means uncommon occurrence.

INDEX.

A.

PAGE
ANIMALS (Future for).....149-150
,, (Phantasms of) 145-150
Antagonistic Elementals 157-8, 163
,, Forces 157
Automatic Writing 177

B.

BANSHEE .....23 (def. of), 24, 25
Baroness Von A— (Case of the).....67-72, 113-115
Barrowvians .....79 (def. of)
Bellew (Case of Mrs.).....77
Benevolent Elementals.....153-7
,, Forces .....157 (def. of), 163
Bruce (Case of Mrs.).....63-4
Buccas 164

C.

C—— (Case of Miss).....39-41
Carmichael (Case of Miss).....116
Cayley (Case of Miss).....169-170
Chichester (Case of Rev. G.).....78-9
Clanogrians.....23 (def. of), 33, 34, 74 82, 159 (def. of), 162, 170
Clifford (Case of Mr.).....7
Clocks (Phantom) 13, 38, 73, 163
Clock that struck Thirteen.....13, 33, 73
Clothes of Phantasms.....153-154
Coaches (Phantom) 163
Cone shaped head (Phantasm with).....66
Coney (Mr. and Mrs.).....46
Cornelius (Case of Mr.).....8

PAGE

Craven (Case of Mrs.).....98-100
Cyclist in grey.....43

D.

D—— (Case of Miss).....172-3
Dalrymple (Case of Miss).....106-110
Dead (Phantasms of the).....90, 98, 99, 103, 105, 145-6
Death Candles of Wales.....23, 81
Death Warnings 39, 161
Debrett (Case of Miss).....100, 102
Dodd (Case of Miss).....66-67
Dreams 45-56, 113-119
Drummers (Phantom).....23, 72, 82

E.

Elementals (def. of).....11 (def. of), 155 (def. of)
Elmore (Case of Mrs.).....152-3

F.

Family Ghosts.....72, 74, 82 159 (def. of)
Falmouth 37
Featherstone (Case of Miss).....84, 117-119
Fire Elementals.....77, 162

H.

H—— (Phantasm of).....37-8
Hacon (Rev. H.).....123, 127-129
Howards (Case of).....113-115

I.

Impersonating Elementals.....76, 86, 94, 99, 103, 112, 161-2 (def. of), 167

K.

K—— (Case of Mr.).....41-3
Kobolds 164

L.

Lady —— (Case of).....37
Laying of Phantasms.....177-8
Lichens (Haunting of the).....106-110

PAGE

Lights (Spirit) 79-80
Living (Phantasms of).....34, 44, 151-3, 173

M.

Mad (Spirits of the).....84, 91, 179
Materialisation 163
Mines (Phantasms in).....164-165
Morbas.....3-9, 74, 159 (def. of), 179
Murdered (Phantasms of)...108, 111, 112, 116, 155
Murderers (Phantasms of).....105, 110

N.

Nature Spirits.....11
Neutral Elementals 162

O.

Omens 41

P.

P—— (Case of Mrs.).....92-95
Palmer the Murderer.....12
Phantasms (Classification of).....144
,, (def. of) 143
Pig's head (Phantasm with).....59-63
Pipers (Phantasms of).....23, 82
Pixies 10, 76-78, 80, 88-89, 163
Poltergeists 82, 85
Portman Square (Tragedy in).....34, 73
Projection 35, 117-8
Projection (Process of).....39
Psychic Faculty 163

R.

Radiant Boy 72
Raynor (Case of Miss).....44-5
Reed (Case of Mr.).....66
Rolands (Case of Miss).....74-6

S.

"S" (Phantasm of "Old").....104

PAGE

Sea (Phantasms of the).....160
Séances 85-6, 162, 174-7
Ships (Phantom of).....163
Sinclair (Case of Miss) 64-5
Soul (def. of).....91
Souls of Good.....146-8
Spirit (def. of).....91
St. Jermyn (Case of Miss).....95-98
Stewart (Case of Rev. J.).....123-129
Suicides (Phantasms of).....90-91, 155
Suggestion 115
Sydersterne Parsonage (Haunting of).....123-132

T.

Telepathy 117, 171-174
Trees 168-170

U.

Urquhart (Case of Mrs.).....110-112

V.

Vagrarians (def. of).....12, 159
Vagrarians.....11-23, 25-31, 66, 82, 131, 159, 161, 163
Vice Elementals.....31, 56, 62, 63, 64, 65, 82, 131, 138, 157, 167, 170, 179
Vincent (Case of Miss).....82, 84
Vincent (Case of Miss Viola).....103-105

W.

W—— (Case of Mrs.) 35, 79
Walton (Case of Mr.).....61-2
Williams (Case of Dr.).....59-61
Wraithes 91

Y.

Yellow Boy 72

Date Due

Demco 293-5

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.O215

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